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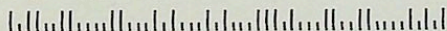
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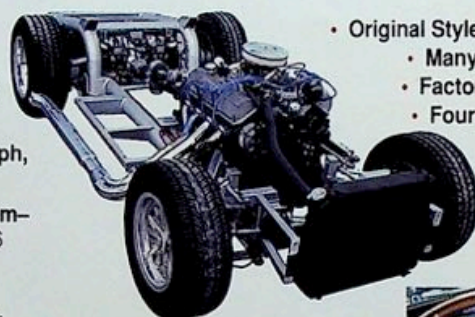
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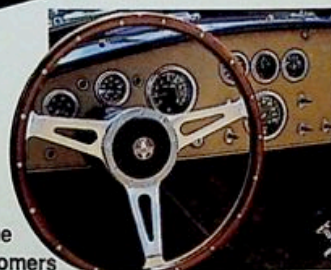
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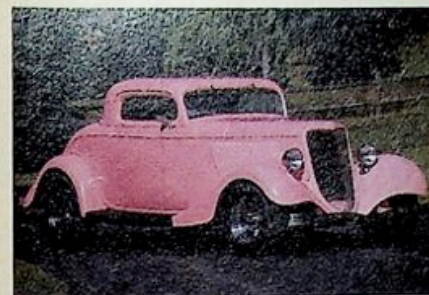
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Coupes, Cobras and cats make
a comeback 14



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is wonderful 22



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Germany? 46

On the Cover: Don't you wish you had this project in your driveway? David Fetherston captured David Mallett and Tina Reichmuth wrenching on this Mustang-donor Cobra. For more on this and other kit builds, see our special section on "Kit How-Tos," starting on page 24. If you're into red-hot Porsches, turn to page 62.

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KIT CAR

THE SPECIALTY CAR MAGAZINE

January 1995 • Volume 14, Number 1

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UP FRONT

Show Us Your Kit Car

Inquiring minds want to know: How do I get my car featured in the magazine? There's really no big secret to it, but I've heard some pretty strange comments from readers and kit manufacturers who think they know how. "You've got to take the editor out to a posh restaurant, and then send him some really cool T-shirts and stuff," say a lot of folks. (Actually, it wouldn't hurt to try that tactic, but I'm pretty picky about which T-shirts I wear, and since we're on the subject, I'm partial to Thai food.)

Other people are utterly convinced that only if a company buys a really big ad will I consider featuring its kit. (On the other hand, a few companies prefer only to run advertising and don't want any editorial coverage—maybe they've got something to hide?) In reality, while a number of featured companies do buy advertising (that's often the only way I find out about some products), if you look carefully, you'll see that a number of kits



department, along with a short description written by me based on material gathered from the press release and/or a phone interview.

For a full feature article, however, I insist that either I or one of my regular contributors personally inspect the vehicle. As long as I am editor of this magazine, we'll always check out any new kits firsthand before running feature coverage. What's really surprising to me is that sometimes I request photos and specs on a new kit we've heard about, but certain manufacturers never send them (or fail to provide a demo car), and then—get this—they'll ask later why I never featured their cars. Go figure.

For a car to merit something more than a news release, the decking factor is not whether a company advertises or not but whether you, the reader, find it interesting. You see, I have an editorial product to sell, and if you don't like it, it doesn't include what you want. I'm out of a job. So the most important consideration in featuring this or that car is whether it's appealing and interesting. Generally speaking, I prefer to run features on cars that are currently available from a company, but I'll throw in a one-off or discontinued car for the element of surprise.

But what about readers' questions? How can they be featured in *UP FRONT*? Again, all it takes is for you to send me a snapshot and letter describing your car in detail, and include any interesting features about the build-up and your experience of ownership. Your comments about the kit, both the bright spots and demerits, are run regularly in the "Show-Off" department. All these cars are candidates for feature coverage, so when you send in your material, don't forget to include your name, address and phone number so we can contact you prior to our next trip to your area. And that's all there is to it. Now, where's my T-shirt?

Steve Temple

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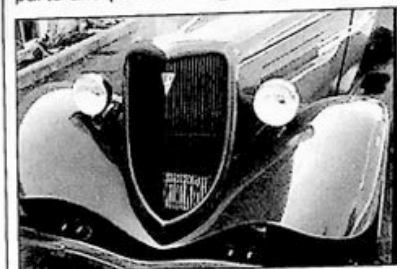
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MAILBOX

PHAR-OUT PHANTOM

Just a couple of thoughts and comments on the "Phantom Phord" (July '94). I guess beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but I don't find Classic Motor Carriages' fastback '34 at all attractive. I think they missed the mark on that one. I have put approximately 7000 miles on my '34 CMC Cabriolet and find that it handles good, drives good and, with some alterations, looks good. (It always gets good comments.)

I had many problems with CMC getting parts and pieces and getting it together. I



can only hope the company's reorganization does what is necessary to give the product and service that its customers deserve and pay for. Your comments about the grille were the same as mine (and others) in that it looks like jail bars. Fortunately, there is a solution. A pal of mine produces repro grille inserts by hand for many early cars, including the CMC cars. He goes under the name "Grill's." Contact Dick Nussey, RR 5, Tilbury, Ontario, Canada, NOP-2LO, 519/682-2048. The cost runs approximately \$400.

I have enclosed a photo of my '34 with Dick's grille, and I think it looks great. Also, note the "lowers" in the fiberglass hood side panels—quite a trick done by a local rodder pal/shop owner. You should also know that the CMC '34s are not dimensionally the same as stock '34s or other reproduction cars. The grille and front end are 2 inches shorter and will not accept stock/reproduction '34 radiators, grilles, hoods and so on. I found out the hard way after buying a Walker radiator. Walker will make a rod that fits the CMC shortened nose at a 15-percent premium.

Also, the CMC manual states that when installing the Mustang rearend and locator arms, you can use stock Ford hardware, bolts and so on, which I did. However, NSRA would not safety the car because the bolts are a bit short due to thicker-than-original brackets, resulting in the nuts not having full penetration. I have not had any problems at all with the

nuts backing off, but I will replace them this winter with 1/4-inch longer bolts to satisfy the NSRA safety people.

Jim Prowse
London, Ontario

P.S. I am always glad to talk to folks who are building a CMC '34 and offer some tips and hints about construction that might save them some time and trouble. (519/663-2116, 7-11 a.m.; 519/434-3579, 7-10 p.m.)

INCITING A RIOT?

After reading your magazine for more than two years, I was very excited about the sneak preview of the "new exotic for under \$10,000" ("Back to the Future," Sept. '94), but again I was disappointed. The "new exotic" was someone's concept car that did not even have a fullsize mock-up yet. What does exotic mean in your mind? No doors? This is nothing but a slicked-up beach buggy. If there is such a big demand for this type of vehicle, why do I continue to see the molds-for-sale ad that appeared on page 102 of the September '94 issue? This is a VW bolt-on kit that has been advertised for sale in your magazine for at least a year.

For the last two years I have been watching the ads and the buyers' guides you have published, as well as reading the articles. I continue to wonder why you give almost 50 percent of your article space to Cobra kits and mods, and then when you finally print a major article on a different vehicle, it is about something which does not even exist yet. What about all those great companies out there that are producing quality kits and have never had an article or just a mention in your magazine?

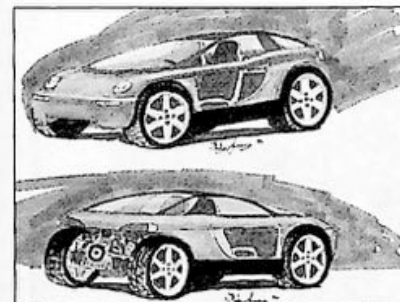
Larry Singleton
Arlington, TX

The Riot caught our eye as an inexpensive and appealing design concept, and as other car magazines do, we thought it would be interesting to provide a peek at the future. The word "exotic" means different things to different people, and here it refers to the car's "slicked-up" styling. Unfortunately, the project seems to be on hold now due to a lack of investment capital. The same problem has afflicted the Maraan Mardian GTA you mentioned. Your Cobra complaint is a common one, but the truth of the matter is that these are the kits that are selling and the ones most readers want to hear more about. We would be glad to feature other kits, and all it takes is for a reader

or manufacturer to follow the simple suggestions in this month's "Up Front" column.

DESIGNER VW

I would like to congratulate your magazine for inviting submissions for a design column. I have been working on a dune buggy design based on a shortened VW pan (86 inches) for the last few months,



and I was pleasantly shocked by Corbett's Riot design ("Back to the Future," Sept. '94). I think that his idea is what the real kit car of the '90s and future should be. Kit cars have become so expensive that a big niche has been left void. I am building a model of my design, and if somebody is interested in it for a full-scale model, I would be thrilled (904/262-5731). Thank you for the opportunity to show off my design. Keep up the great work.

Italo Sciacca
Jacksonville, FL

PRONE TO BATCHELOR

I find the articles by renowned Ferrari historian and automotive journalist extraordinaire Dean Batchelor really enjoyable. How did you get him to write for Kit Car? Also, your writers sometimes use the word "prone," which means lying face down, when I think what they mean is supine or semirecumbent.

Ken Scarlett
Phoenix, AZ

Well, Dean writes for us from time to time because we pay him really well for his expertise, and he happens to enjoy a well-turned replica. As for lying prone in the cockpit, we can't always control how our writers drive a kit car.

Letters in Kit Car reflect the opinions of the writers and do not imply the endorsement of this magazine. All letters should be addressed to Kit Car magazine, 6420 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048-5515. Letters should include the writer's name, address and telephone number. We reserve the right to edit letters for clarity, brevity or other editorial purposes. Due to the volume of mail received, we cannot answer letters privately.

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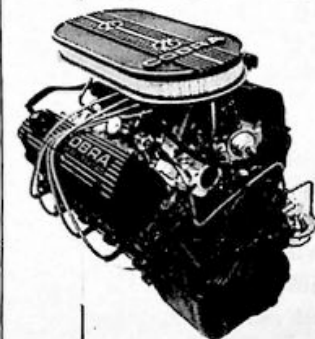
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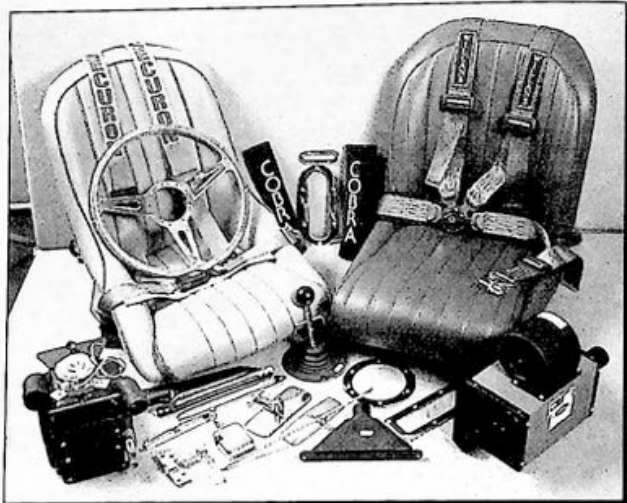
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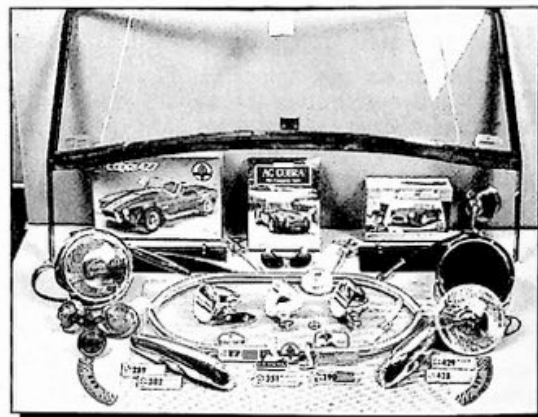
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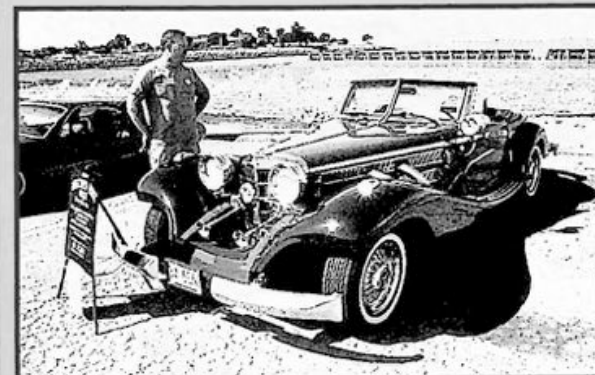
SPECIALTY SCENE

NORCAL KITS

One of our favorite club events is on the San Francisco Bay, and not just because of the scenic setting. The Northern California Kit Car Club (510/938-1442) always draws a great mix of cars and throws a good mixer on Saturday night, too. This year's event was no different, and many of the award-winning cars were also our picks. Don't miss out on next year's show, which will be held again in September.



George Evans' Mercury lead sled (right) was one of the few customs at the event. Don Loux's Cord (center), featured in the July '94 issue, earned Best of Show. Diana Price of the The Classic Factory, who rolled up in her sleek Auburn (left), won the Best Manufacturer trophy.



Al Bohr came all the way from Salem, Oregon, in his 500K replica to take the Distance award.



The President's Choice went to Wayne Austin's V8-powered Blue Ray Rhino reboddy for Z-cars. (See "Celebrity Impersonators," May '94 for details.)



This surprisingly accurate, custom-built body conversion uses original panels that fit on—surprise!—a Chrysler LeBaron. Frank Villaseñor of Frank's Auto Repair (805/928-8646) did an incredible job fabricating this one-off.



John Knebel's '54 Glaspar G-2 made a return appearance and took home the Best Vintage award again.



The Most Unique honors went, not surprisingly, to Jim Standiford's Tri Magnum.



More than 70 entrants showed up for the event at the San Leandro Marina.



Tom Cogan's Countach clone, with a Prova body and custom chassis, took the Best Interior and Best Technical Achievement awards.

SPECIALTY SCENE

MIAMI ROADSTER

OK, is it a Daytona Spyder that's been left in the dryer too long or simply a much more macho Miata? You decide, but either way Blue Ray has come up with a really easy and inex-

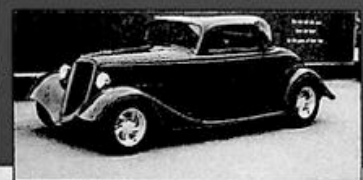


pensive way to upgrade this appealing little roadster. The company is known for its first-rate Datsun re-dos, and the quality of the Miami Roadster's mold plug shown here looks equally as good. Look for more on this \$2695 kit in an upcoming issue. If you can't wait, call Blue Ray at 713/363-2000.



COOL COUPE

L.A. Exotics, in addition to having its Cobra replicas featured on TV (Cobra with Michael Dudikoff and The Price is Right), now has a new street rod kit. Priced at a surprisingly low \$10,995, the '34 Coupe Stage 1 comes with a color zinc-coated body, that mounts on an original-style boxed frame with an X-member, a custom X-member for IRS (not included) and four-bar brackets for a 9-inch axle (not included). A Stage 1 kit has the suspension pieces installed, the inner panels mounted and the hood doors and trunk hinged. A full feature is scheduled for an upcoming issue. Call L.A. Exotics at 714/523-3464. The company also offers a financing package that's rarely seen in the kit market. Offered through Bank One of Ohio, the one-to-five-year loan program requires 20 percent down, and the interest rate is about 10 percent.



CATERHAM'S NEW CONCEPT

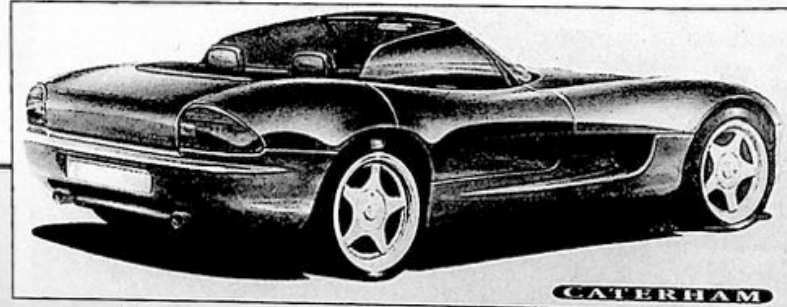
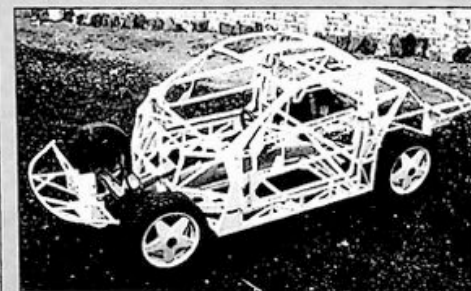
Known as the only licensed company to produce the Lotus Super Seven, Caterham is proposing a stablemate that uses many of the same components as the Seven but with contemporary full-body styling (no attached fenders) and either a Vauxhall HPC 2.0-liter or Rover K 1600 engine. Although the initial body will be made of aluminum, a lower-priced fiberglass version is a possibility. For more details, Caterham's U.S. distributor is Moto America, Inc. and can be reached at 407/636-9668.

MAKE A RUN FOR THE BORDER

Mexico still churns out the ever-popular VW Beetle, so it's no surprise that the Mastretta prototype from Unediseno, an industrial design firm in Mexico City, is based on the VW pan and 1600cc engine, which now features fuel injection and front disc brakes. The vehicle is currently available only as a turn-key car in Mexico, but designer Daniel Mastretta is considering adapting it to kit form for



the U.S. market. It's obvious from the photos that the spaceframe that fits on the VW pan has been well-engineered with meticulous triangulation of the structural members for improved chassis rigidity. Of course, our first impulse would be to spice up the plain-vanilla powerplant to match this coupe's crisp, sporty styling. The projected price of the turn-key car in Mexico is \$17,300, and \$6000 to \$9000 for the kit. For more information on the Mastretta, you can reach Unediseno by calling (from the United States) 011 525 593 5663.



CATERHAM

IF YOU'RE ABOUT TO BUY A KIT... READ THIS FIRST!

"If you're shopping for a kit car and you want to save money and avoid aggravation... then getting your hands on this big Guide should be your top priority." —Jerry Lisowski, Editor, Pennsylvania Kit Car Club Newsletter

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—George Evans, President, Specialty Constructed Vehicle Assn. (SCVA)

Not a single day passes that I don't receive a telephone call from an anguished kit car consumer who states "I only wish that I had your guide before I bought my kit. I thought I was getting a bargain."

At the top of the page you'll see quotes and raves by respected writers, kit car club editors and individual kit car enthusiasts just like you. If space permitted, we could display hundreds more. *The Complete Guide to Specialty Cars* has been the #1 source of pull-no-punches information about kit cars since 1983. And our new 8th Edition is far-and-away our best ever.

I've been personally compiling, writing and photographing for this big guide ever since the very first edition. It's what I do. All day, every day. We attend every major kit car event all around the country, we visit the manufacturers, we tell you who the good guys are, who the flakes are. We do all the legwork and careful research that you should do yourself, but can't.

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• We also publish a monthly kit car advertiser titled *Kit Car Marketeer & Cobra Trader*, which 12 times a year showcases hundreds of kit cars and Cobras FOR SALE BY PRIVATE OWNERS all over the U.S. and Canada. It's \$15 a year. A goldmine for bargain hunters.

• *Discover the World of Kit Cars* is our professionally-produced videotape, narrated by none other than Bruce Flanders. It features coverage of Knott's Berry Farm and Run and Gun, and interviews with manufacturers and other industry luminaries. Unlike other kit car videos you'll see advertised, it contains no promotional footage. It's \$24.95 plus \$4 P&H, and it's the best kit car video on the market.

• If you've got the wampum to spare, order all three for a tidy savings. If you don't, then make *The Complete Guide to Specialty Cars* your very first investment. The rest can come later, in your own time. If you're shopping only for Cobras or GT40s, call and order our brand-new *Complete Guide to Cobra Replicas*.

Some magazines periodically insert a so-called "kit car buyer's guide" section. If you assumed that's all the "band-on-the-shoulder" guidance you need, you should reconsider. *Order this big guide today and discover why*.

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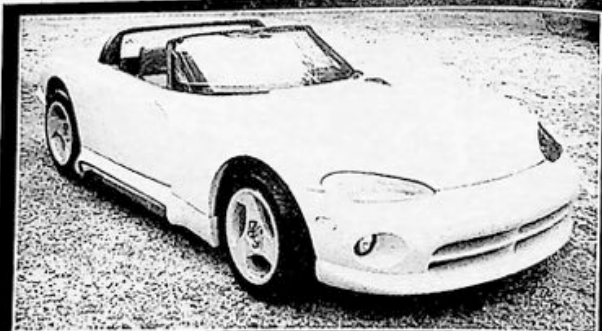
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SPECIALTY SCENE

DROP-TOP Z-CAR

Want to give your Z-car a whole new look for a minimum amount of money? Hollywood MotorSports (310/542-5532) has a convertible conversion kit that costs only \$1295. Designed by Freeman Cars and a Nissan engineer, the kit includes tubular steel unibody reinforcements and a gelcoated Kevlar rear cap. The company claims the conversion requires about 10 to 12 hours of work and can be performed by a novice in a home garage.



AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER

We've noticed of late that several companies are beginning to base their sincerest-form-of-flattery rebodies on a current U.S.-made sports car instead of Euro-exotics. One of the better ones we've seen is from Automotive Affair (519/668-1499), a Canadian company that has been in the automotive styling business for several years. Priced at \$6900, the Venom conversion fits on the '84 to '95 Corvette, and a coupe version is also in the works. Look for a full feature in an upcoming issue.

CLUB MANX

Bruce Meyers, originator of the wildly popular fiberglass dune buggy craze, is forming a club for all owners of both real and imitation Manx dune buggies. Bruce realizes that not all buggy owners know if theirs is a Manx, but he's glad to help you determine this if you send him front and rear shots, along with the serial number (found above the tunnel behind the front seats or above the pedals under the dash). Some of the earlier cars did not have a tag with a serial number, so you may need to send a photo of the area behind the front seat where the battery box and spare



Bruce Meyers hopes to stimulate the same sort of enthusiasm shown in this first Manx club meet in the mid-'70s.

One of the best-selling issues ever of Hot Rod featured Bruce Meyers going for it in his Manx. Kit Car contributor Eric Rickman, who's recently been lionized in the International Drag Racing Hall of Fame, captured it on the first take, as usual.

tire wells are molded in. Club dues are \$25 annually, and an original Meyers Manx will be entered in the registry for \$5. Included with the club dues is Manx Mania, a quarterly newsletter with a technical column, a calendar of events and stories from Bruce himself regaling us with the rich history of the Manx. Bruce also has plans for new Classic Manx and Original Manx kits and is looking for investors to help launch these products. Contact Manx Dune Buggy Club, Dept. KC01, P.O. Box 1491, Valley Center, CA 92082.



HEY LITTLE COBRA

At the Fifth Annual Route 66 Rendezvous in San Bernardino, California, a bright-red Contemporary Classic Cobra replica owned by Jim Davis was awarded Best Cruiser by Carol Conners, the songwriter who wrote the '60s hit "Hey Little Cobra." More than 900 rods, replicas, customs and muscle cars crowded the downtown streets for this September event. **KC**

PHOTO: BRENDA BENFIELD



12 KIT CAR

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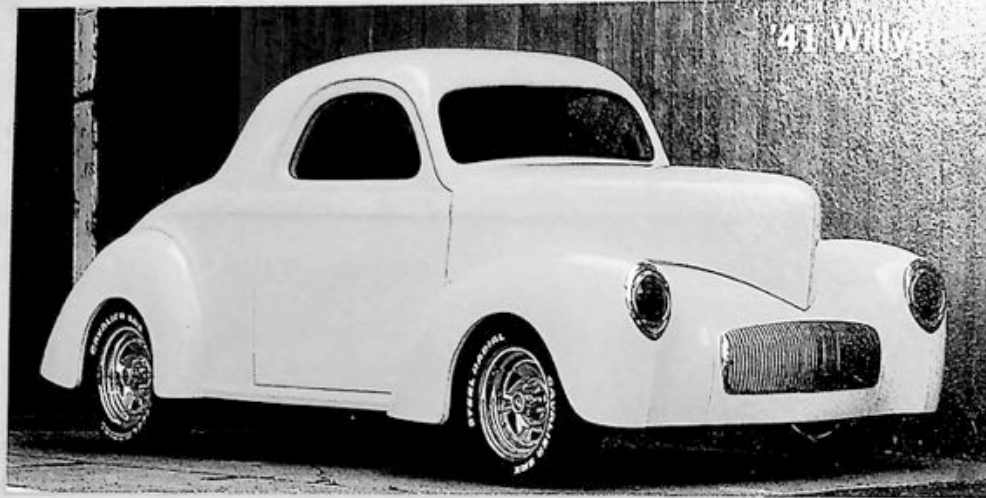
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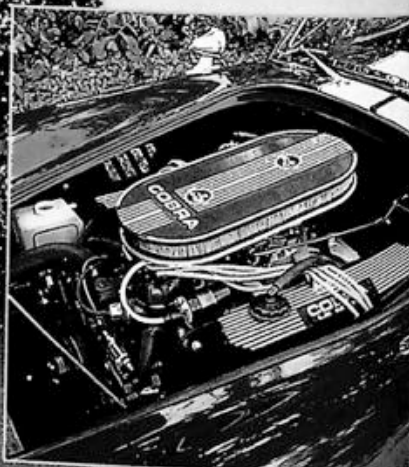
41 Willys



'37 Jaguar SS100



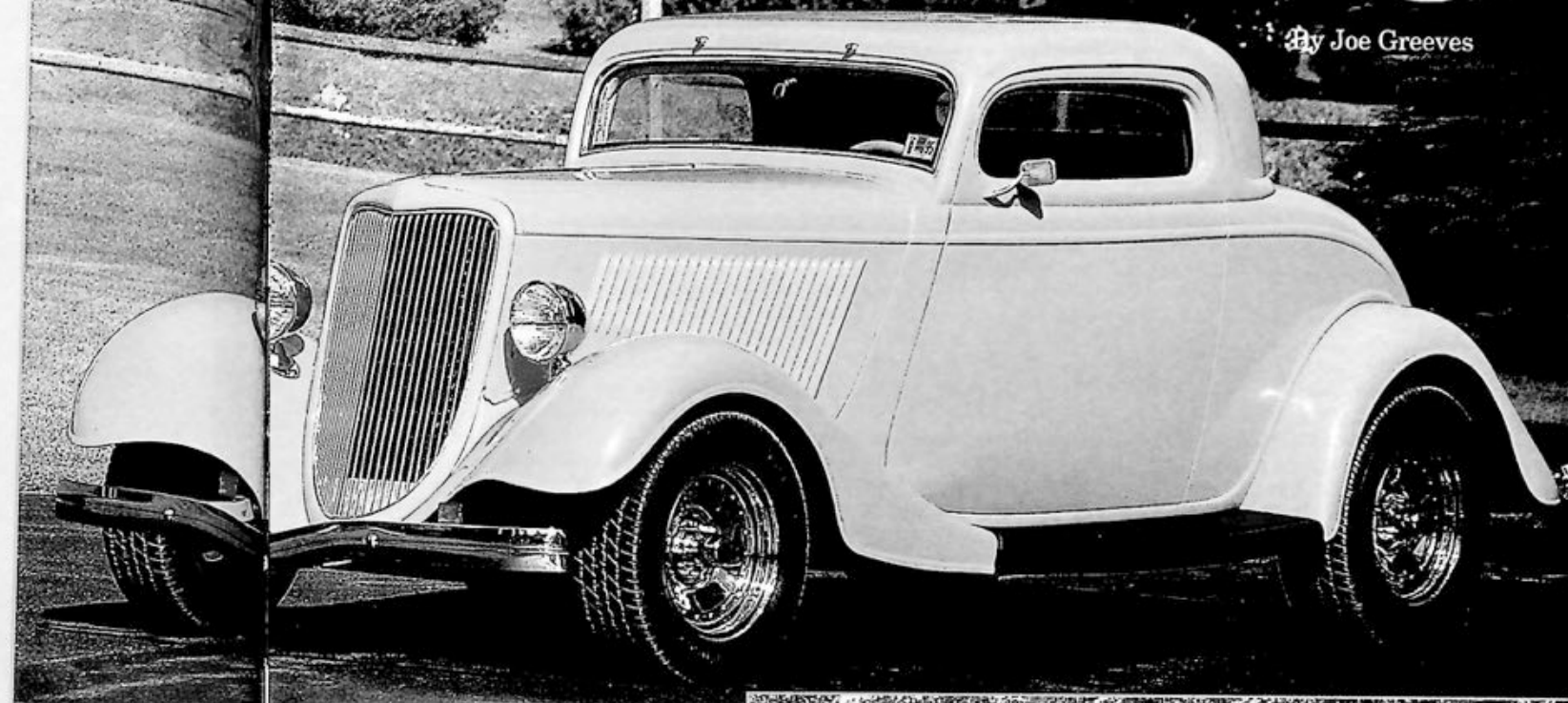
427 Cobra



PHOTOGRAPHY: JOE GREEVES, STEVE TEMPLE & DAVID FETHERSTON

Comeback King

By Joe Greeves



'34 Ford Coupe

Antique & Collectible Autos Picks Up Where Another Left Off, and Comes On Strong With a Whole New Line of Kits

Kit car enthusiasts are no strangers to change. The kit car industry often appears to be a world in tumult, with new manufacturers sprouting like dandelions in spring and older, established firms suddenly wilting under the heat of creditors. That's all the more reason for potential kit customers to know something about a company's background, colorful or otherwise.

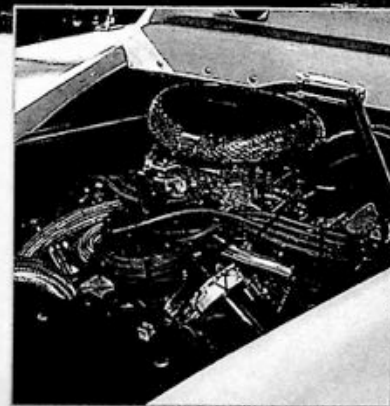
One outfit that may ring a bell with longtime readers is Antique & Classic Automotive, which was active for many years, producing two vintage Jaguar replicas. Then one day in



'52 Jaguar XK120

May 1990, the profits simply weren't enough to cover expenses, and bankruptcy forced the company to close its doors. Customers called, only to find that they needed help from the Attorney General's office to recover their deposits. (Unfortunately, this was by no means the first and only time we would see such a scenario in our industry.)

Enter Joe Trombley. He was the fiberglass supplier for Antique & Classic and did not want to see the



Comeback King

company or the dream die. At a February 1991 auction, Joe bought the assets ("Not the headaches," says Joe, "just the assets!") of the company and created a new one called Antique & Collectible Autos (A&C), with ambitious plans for diversification and expansion. These plans have born much fruit since then, and the company has far exceeded the success of its predecessor to the point that it is now one of the key players in the kit industry.

One Hot Cat

Although Trombley wasn't legally bound to correct any problems from the former owners, he worked with previous customers in whatever ways he could to help them complete their cars. One of those customers was Bob Pfeifer, who got a call from Trombley saying he would honor the deposit Pfeifer had with the old company on a Jaguar XK120 replica. Pfeifer was so pleased, he accepted the offer and built the beautiful XK120 replica seen here. Then he carried it a step further and became one of the top assemblers (RJP Specialties, 216/234-9253) for the new company, producing turn-key

heavy side rails in the doors. Pfeifer's car weighs 600 pounds more than the standard version, but hey, personalizing your car is what building a kit is all about, right?

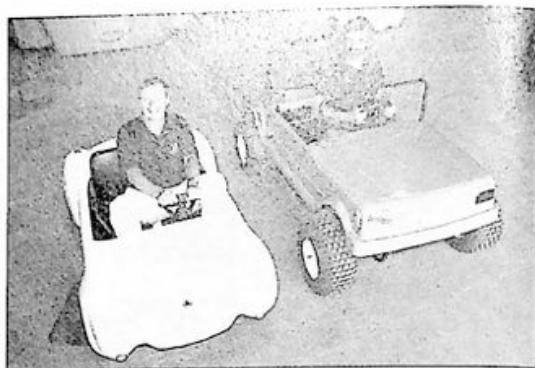
Pfeifer installed a Mustang II front end but used stock coils from an '84 Chevette instead of the cut Ford coils recommended in the kit. He found that they fit perfectly and gave a much better ride. (They have now become a standard part of the kit.) The rear uses an 8-inch Ford, with leaf springs matched to the Mustang front-end geometry.

For motive power, Pfeifer chose a 302ci SVO Ford backed up with a C4 automatic. The 285hp V8 sports an Edelbrock four-barrel, a single-plane intake and tri-Y headers instead of the stock Ford manifold for increased ground clearance. He also squeezed power steering, power brakes and a five-core radiator into the small engine compartment. A complete belly pan and full inner fender panels were added because Pfeifer hates to "see through" a car.

The authentic-looking interior uses the traditional bench seat with the

the dozens of extra details to folks asking about the car.

Pfeifer spared no expense tailoring his Jag exactly the way he wanted it. He can assemble a "standard" version for you that benefits from many of the changes he has incorporated into his own car. His turn-key price starts at \$20,000. A&C offers the basic kit for \$8995, which includes the body, frame, interior, lights, windshield frame and glass template, grille, bumpers, gauges, wipers, convertible top, steering wheel and more. Everything but the engine, trans and suspension comes with the



Antique & Collectible's Joe Trombley (right) and Sonny Sajak (left) clown a bit in some go-kart bodies the company also manufactures.

Skinning a Cobra

The 427 Cobra line was added to the A&C line shortly after Trombley started the new company and was a critical element in his plan to diversify. The Cobra opened the company to a whole new group of buyers. This replica has several subtle changes to make it more user-friendly. Trombley narrowed the transmission tunnel slightly and moved the firewall forward, not enough to jeopardize space for a big engine but enough to make the cockpit a little roomier. He's added Coremat to the foot boxes to keep them cooler and runs mechanical and electric fans on the big 429 Super Cobra Jet to keep air moving in the engine compartment. He recommends wrapped or ceramic-coated headers as another way of combating heat buildup in the passenger compartment. All are small changes, but they add up to increased comfort and livability, which is important to his target audience.

The company's base-level Cobra begins with the \$10,995 kit. Included is a 2x4 rectangular steel frame, crossbraced and using 2x2 steel side rails. Motor mounts are available for small- or big-block Fords or Chevys. It comes with front and rear Carrera coil-overs, a four-link rear suspension holding a 9-inch Ford with narrowed axles, and tubular upper and lower A-arms with five-lug rotors.

The body comes color gelcoated and is a combination of machine and handlaid fiberglass reinforced with Coremat. Trombley is very knowledgeable about fiberglass technology, having laid up everything from swimming pools to industrial-duty equipment shelters to record-setting powerboats, and he employs special, modified resin mixtures to ensure a smooth, ripple-free finish.

Instruments, a Lucas light package, a windshield, hinges and latches, weather stripping and a hardware package, plus Naugahyde seats, a dash, door panels and carpet are all part of the base kit. A&C also provides a list of donor parts by year and

model that are engineered to slip into place. If you're not into the auto salvage scene, the company also offers custom-crafted items such as steering columns, radiators, wheels, wipers and so on. Trombley estimates that the reasonably experienced first-time builder could complete the kit in 150 to 200 hours. No welding, fiberglassing or painting is required.

The next level, the "glider" or rolling chassis, comes minus engine and trans, and the body is not mounted. Costing about \$13,000, it includes everything in the base kit plus brake lines, gas lines, spindles, struts, rack-and-pinion steering and more. The glider speeds the assembly process a bit, eliminating about 25 hours from the total time. And, if you're really in a hurry, there are the turn-key versions with prices starting around \$25,000 for an assembled car with a small-block Ford or Chevy and automatic trans.

Street Rods on a Roll

Finally, the newest products in the growing A&C inventory are street rods: the nostalgic '34 Ford three-window coupe and the drag racer's favorite, the '41 Willys. Trombley points out that these are very accurate reproductions and claims that original bodies and chassis will interchange with his fiberglass bodies and his boxed and crossbraced street rod frames. Both cars use standard Mustang II geometry and can be ordered Pro-Street style with wide tires, narrowed rear axles and frame and tubbed rear wheels. There are also plain, velour and tweed interior packages to choose from.

The kits are offered in paintable or color-gelcoat configurations which include the body with separate hood and fender packages. The Pepto-pink painted Coupe shown here was built by Barry Seel of Custom Roadsters (610/767-7670) for Doug Lilly and features power remote-operated doors, windows, an antenna and a rumble seat. Look for more on this Corvette-powered kit in a coming issue.



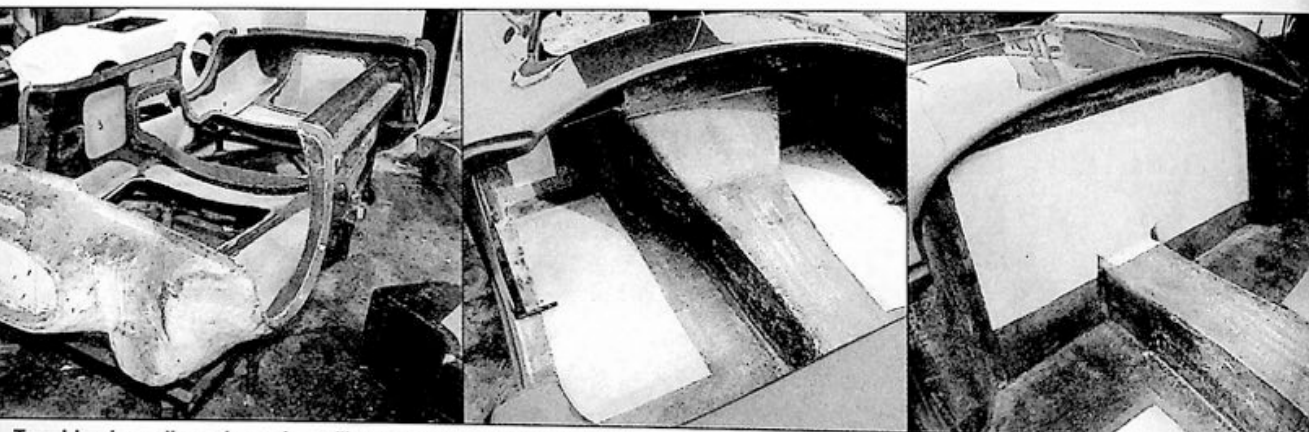
In addition to numerous other fiberglass products, Trombley has built record-setting performance boats.

A&C's street rod kits range from \$4500 to \$4900. Frames start at \$1950 for the standard Ford. Optional upgrades include a Mustang IFS (\$2395), Pro Street packages (\$2495) or Pro Street with Mustang IFS (\$2895). For a similar Willys frame, figure about \$1000 more. Because there is such a wide variance of performance and custom options, A&C lists turn-key costs at \$25,000 and up.

The secret to Trombley's rejuvenation of the company is not a case of the phoenix rising magically from its own ashes. Rather, his approach relied on hard work and convincing one customer at a time that not only could he deliver a quality product, but he would be around for the long haul. Trombley's three-part plan for success includes diversity, staying in close touch with his market and, finally, reinvesting his profits back into the company.

Trombley describes himself as a Baby Boomer and says most of his friends are in the same category. He's targeted his cars to this group, and because he gets a lot of direct input—and listens—he's able to hit the mark. Under consideration are a third Jaguar replica (this time an XKE) and maybe, if the current versions continue to sell as well as they have been, an additional street rod. Look for more from this growing company soon. **KC**

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Trombley is really serious about fiberglass quality, though. For added strength, insulation and finish quality, he reinforces the Cobra body with Coremat (note the lighter-colored areas).

cars for Trombley's new customers.

One of the interesting things about Pfeifer is that although he can follow instructions, he generally chooses not to. Assembling his new Jag could have been a simple thing, but Bob's 20 years of auto racing dictated a different approach. Like the trucks in his trucking company, Pfeifer likes everything overbuilt. As a result, the original 2x4-inch ladder frame supplied with the Jaguar kit now sports an additional X-member, 1 1/4-inch tubing surrounding the cockpit, additional front and rear bracing, and

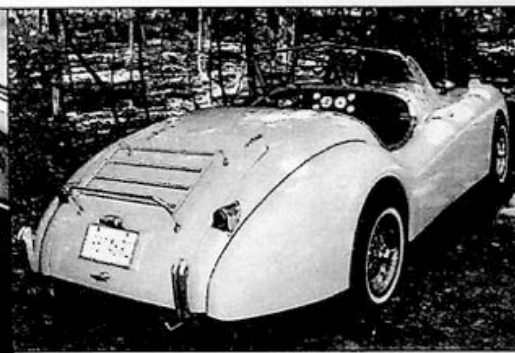
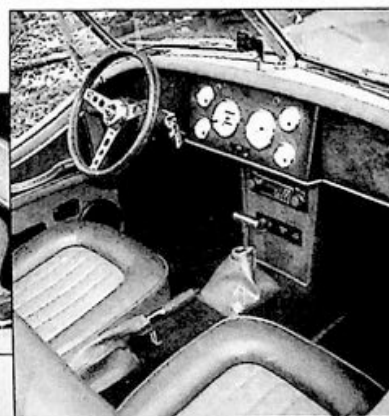
optional tubular trim kit. Seat and door panels are done in dark, natural leather, contrasting with the light cream exterior. The rosewood dash from the kit was installed, along with a full package of white-faced SVO gauges. A 75-watt Sony stereo provides additional entertainment.

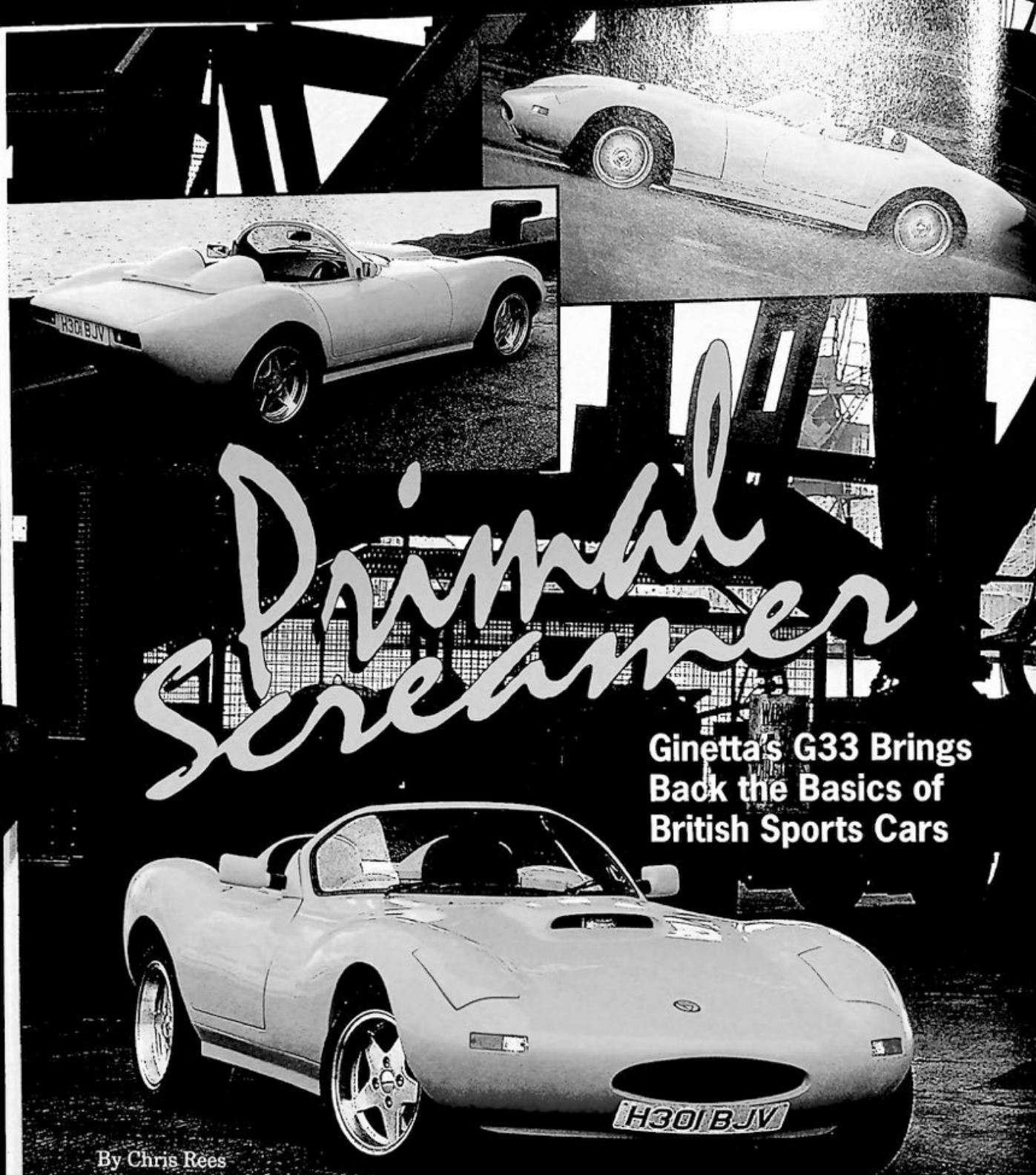
Pfeifer spent six months of long days and nights building his Jag. That included taking it apart and reassembling it three times—part of his "good is not good enough" philosophy. Now that it's "great," Pfeifer loves to drive the Jag and to point out

basic kit. A Mustang, Pinto or Bobcat donor car fills in the gaps.

Nostalgia fans may favor A&C's SS100 replica instead, a carryover product from the previous company, which uses similar running gear in the front-engine version or Volkswagen mechanicals for the rear-engine model. A wide range of "gingerbread" trim items are available, from Brooklands fold-down aero screens to wire basket wheels and even an "ah-oo-gah" horn. The kit price starts at \$5995 (VW) and \$7995 (front engine).

Bob Pfeifer's XK120 replica sports a 302 Ford and optional trim items for the rear deck and cockpit.





Primal Screamer

Ginetta's G33 Brings Back the Basics of British Sports Cars

By Chris Rees

Automotive pundits proclaim—and you could hardly miss it—that retro styling is in. If your new design is not composed of classical curves and the odd detail throwback to the glory days of car styling, it isn't modern. That being the case, Ginetta Cars, Ltd. stands to do very well with its G33. The car is not so much retro as a direct continuation of a line. The gorgeous shape of the G33 dates right back to 1961, when four race-minded brothers, the Walkletts, graduated from making very

basic kit cars to the sublime G4. This was a typically curvaceous shape of the time, with a classic oval grille and Lotus-style bulging fenders.

In its day, the G4 pretty much cleaned up on the track. It also made a popular but down-to-earth road car, outfitted with a highly tunable 1.0-liter Ford Anglia engine. Although production of the G4 ceased in 1969, it was revived by Ginetta in 1981 with Ford Kent power. The G27 of 1985 was a more radical version of the same

PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRIS REES

shape, with a choice of engines right up to V8 power. In 1989, the original Walklett brothers sold the company in order to retire. As part of an ambitious regime of changes, an improved G4/G27 was introduced in 1990: The Ginetta G33 had arrived.

Re-engineered by the last surviving Walklett brother, Ivor, and restyled by his son Mark, the new G33 was easily recognizable by its new pop-up headlamps, curiously squared-off windshield, fat Fondmetal wheels and twin-head fairings. But beneath all the modern add-ons, the basic form of the 33-year-old G4 can still be made out: the old oval grille, the raised haunches, the handle-less doors and the huge fold-forward hood.

Since 1990, Ginetta has not had the easiest of rides. The company has been bought out twice, and its model range has gone through more permutations than a Rubik's Cube. Now, though, the G33 is once again available. The best news of all is that it's a much cheaper and more flexible package than before. For example, you can choose between V8 or Ford Cosworth power at prices from under \$9750.

There is an Englishness about the G33 which is inescapable. It may look stunning and go like a bombshell, but it's also got an uncompromising crudeness that even the hardy Brits find just a bit uncomfortable. For instance, it has no roll-up side windows (just canvas screens), the bare minimum of controls and a really basic soft top. The cockpit is narrow and well laid-out but hardly what you'd call sumptuous: yards of raw black vinyl and little in the way of additional controls. This is an all-or-nothing sports car. Comfort? That's for wimps. Watertight soft top? Forget it. Air conditioning? You must be joking.

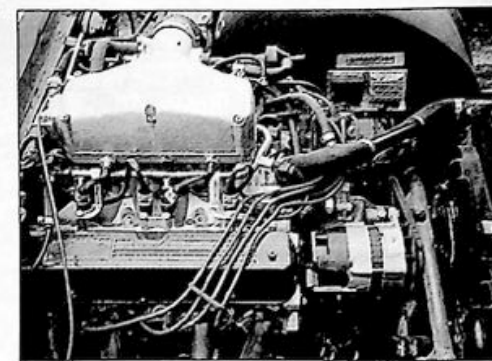
The Ginetta has the feel of a racing car barely tamed for the road. Its muscular shape perfectly mirrors the

beast you'll find under the hood. Although there are several engine options, the G33 we got our hands on came with a 3.9-liter Rover V8. This is basically an expanded version of the venerable Buick 215ci aluminum V8 used by Rover since 1967. The 3.9 is based on the current V8 unit fitted to the Range Rover 4x4, but that doesn't mean it's agricultural. Far from it. In Ginetta tune, it pumps out 205 hp and 220 lb-ft of torque.

The G33 is also light—under 2000 pounds—and it shows. Mashing the throttle to the floor catapults the G33 forward to the accompaniment of the wonderful, deep, throaty and above all loud roar of the V8. There's a massive quantity of torque available from very low down, but all you want to do is kick the beast right up the rev range. It's in the nether regions beyond 4500 rpm that the car really comes alive, becoming a road-gobbling monster with unstoppable urges. You can't help but grin. The G33's shape isn't bad aerodynamically speaking, so a claimed top speed of around 140 mph seems entirely feasible. You can also arrive at 60 mph from rest in just 4.9 seconds. Sizzling stuff.

And the Ginetta *handles*, too. With double wishbones and anti-rollbars at either end, the steering response is superb—excellent turn-in and a finely controllable tail. The fat P215/50ZR Goodyear Eagles hang in there under most circumstances, but the power available to your right foot is always enough to unstick them if you wish. Although piloting the G33 is all excitement, you have to work at it. Nothing is power-assisted, so expect to heave the steering wheel around, shove the gear lever across its wide gate and stomp heartily on the brakes. You want a musclecar? You'd better have muscles.

As of May 1994, Ginetta has relaunched the G33 in kit form. The basic body/chassis kit, painted and par-



Engine options include a 205hp 3.9-liter Rover V8 or a Ford Cosworth.

tially assembled with lights and glass in place, costs \$8040. You'll also need to buy the suspension kit \$843, springs and shocks \$479, steering \$249, brake system kit \$185, fuel system \$192, driveshaft \$198, wipers \$345, wiring loom and instruments \$1136, and interior trim kit \$1270. That works out to \$12,936. And you could really do with the heater \$248, weather gear \$1043 and alloy wheels and tires \$893. Ginetta quotes a typical on-the-road cost of \$17,850. (Prices subject to fluctuations in the exchange rate.)

Of course, you also have to source the engine and gearbox. There are two ways to complete a car: either use a Ford Sierra Cosworth as a donor car or buy everything new from Ginetta. The former route means salvaging the Ford's hubs, brake calipers and traction-control system. Then you can choose between using the Sierra Cosworth engine and gearbox or the Rover V8 engine and gearbox. As Sierra Cosworths are not very thick on the ground in the United States, the V8 route is the better option, with Ginetta supplying all the required suspension and brake parts.

It's not cheap, but then you are paying for the development which makes the G33 such a fine driver's car. It may not have the sophistication and polish of a Porsche, but it's a lot more fun. The whole idea behind retro styling is to take its cues from a golden age of design, when things were done with more passion for classical proportion. The Ginetta G33 doesn't need to turn the clock back. It's a genuine example of that golden age which simply refuses to go away. **KC**

SOURCE

Ginetta Cars, Ltd.
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Eastwood Trading Estate
Rotherham, South Yorkshire
United Kingdom S65 1SU
011 44 709 836464 (from the U.S.)

GINETTA G27—JUST AS MUCH FUN FOR NOT AS MUCH MONEY

Less sophisticated but much cheaper than the G33 is Ginetta's G27, essentially an earlier incarnation of the G33 in knock-down kit form. Developed for track use, it can also be bought as a basic kit for the road. It represents excellent value, with assembled body/chassis kits starting at under \$4500. Alternatively, a fully assembled component G27 can be bought for \$20,350. The mechanical basis is very

adaptable: Ginetta's own rear suspension is used in conjunction with a Morris Marina or Ford Capri rear axle, with a Triumph-based setup at the front. Engine options are as long as your arm: 2.0-liter Ford Pinto or GM four-cylinder engines are most popular, but many others, including Mazda rotary or Rover V8 power, are also possible.



LOOKING GLASS

Mirror Image Lives Up to Its Name with a New Countach Clone

By Jerry Heasley



Donald Young calls his fledgling kit car assembly business Street Dreams, and all it takes is one look to see why. Hardly a person on the street realizes that his Lambo look-alike, painted in five-alarm-fire Porsche Guards Red, is a replica. And even then, a close-up view reveals an honest-to-my-\$800-Italian-loafer-shoes exotic car. Five or six people at a time tail Donald to his destination to see their dream car, fittingly named The Reflection because it's available in kit form from Mirror

Image Motorworks.

True to the company name, the body is a mirror image of the Countach that stunned the world at the 1971 Geneva Motor Show. Designed by Marcello Gandini, Ferruccio Lamborghini's successor to the Miura was hailed as a masterpiece of design and at the same time chided for its lack of attention to the laws of aerodynamics. Nonetheless it became the definition of exotic-car looks. Nothing topped the Countach for uninhibited expression of automotive

PHOTOGRAPHY: JERRY HEASLEY

design. Its successor, the Diablo, is another masterpiece of the wild, but the original Countach was so different from contemporaries that it was seen as a car for the year 2000.

Underneath, Donald's kit has no midengine V12, but it does have a midengine 275hp LT1 V8. The chassis is monocoque. The suspension is independent, front and rear, using a combination of Fiero and Corvette components. Power is transmitted to the Corvette half-shafts via a Porsche 911 regeared transaxle, which alone costs more than \$4000.

Young's Street Dream is certainly not cheap. It's no crude look-alike Countach with the road manners of a Pinto or a Mustang II. Those headlights really do pop up; the scoops scoop; the rear wing whooshes downforce; the side doors swing up for dramatic entries and exits; the LT1 350 twists huge Pirelli P7 P345/35 rear tires to fantastic surges of acceleration; the independent rear suspension keeps the rubber in constant contact with undulating surfaces; and the outrageous body sensationalizes a trip to the neighborhood convenience store like a Madonna sighting in Des Moines.

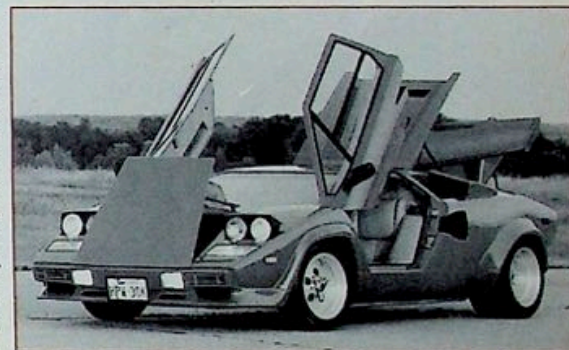
In a world where the average Joe on the street asks "Is that a kit?" of virtually every owner of a 427 Cobra, replica or not, Street Dreams' reflection of the Lamborghini is mostly immune to such investigation. Amazingly, the kit car subject doesn't

come up, Donald explains, probably because people are so excited to see what's usually their first Lamborghini that they couldn't pronounce the name if they could recall it.

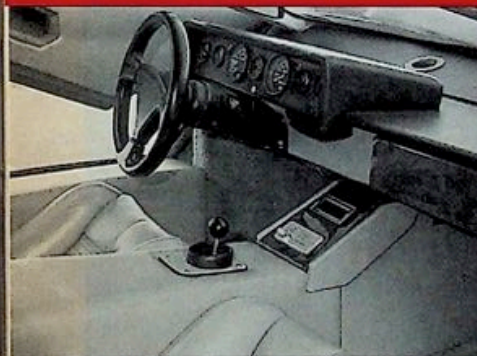
Yet to those in the know about replicas, the first question is invariably "How hard is it to put together?" Perhaps the difficulty factor is a testament to the exoticness of The Reflection. Who would expect such a complex shape to be easy to assemble? Young admits that a Lambo replica is "probably the most difficult kit to build," which is a "third door" that must be opened to gain access to this exclusive club. (The first two doors are the price and the ego to assume a star image.)

What is so difficult about the assembly? Young recalls some details for us: "Fitting the doors and getting them to seal, and adjusting the bottom window to roll up and down with its slope. The wing itself comes in 3 pieces, and you have to mold it together like you want it. Where the headlights pop up, you have to take a die grinder and cut the headlight piece out of there and be able to reuse it for the top of the headlight door. So you have to cut it right in that seam, right on the money."

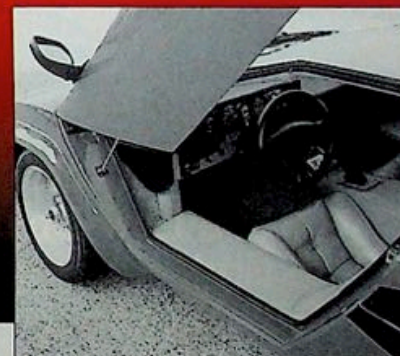
The easiest way to own The Reflection (a name we can't get friendly with) is to order it turn-key from Donald Young. He built the feature car, which is also the demonstrator for Mirror Image Motorworks, the company that sells the kits. They are available in five stages, ranging in price from \$12,650 for Stage 1, which is basically a body and frame, to \$53,240 for Stage 5, which includes everything needed to build a complete car. High-quality vinylester resin (instead of the more common polyester version) and Coremat are used in the lamination schedule, and the gray gel-coat can be sanded for prepping and painting. Also available is a new replica inspired by the 25th anniversary model. Whatever package appeals, we can imagine the result should be as wonderful as Alice stepping through the looking glass. **KC**



The doors and lids operate like a Swiss Army knife.



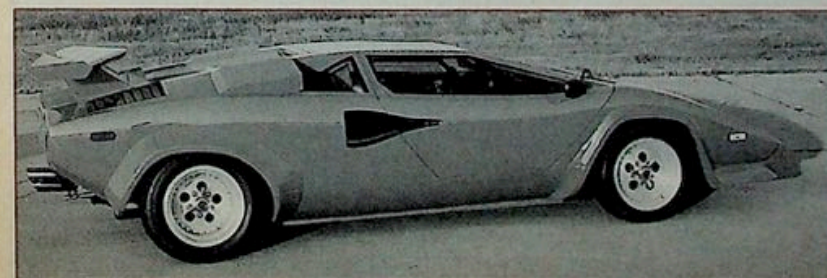
The upholstery is tan leather, and the dash is burlwood.



Cockpit appointments include Stewart-Warner gauges.



The 350 TPI Chevy is mated to a Porsche 911 transaxle with Corvette half-shafts.



It's no wonder the car earned the nickname "The Wedge."

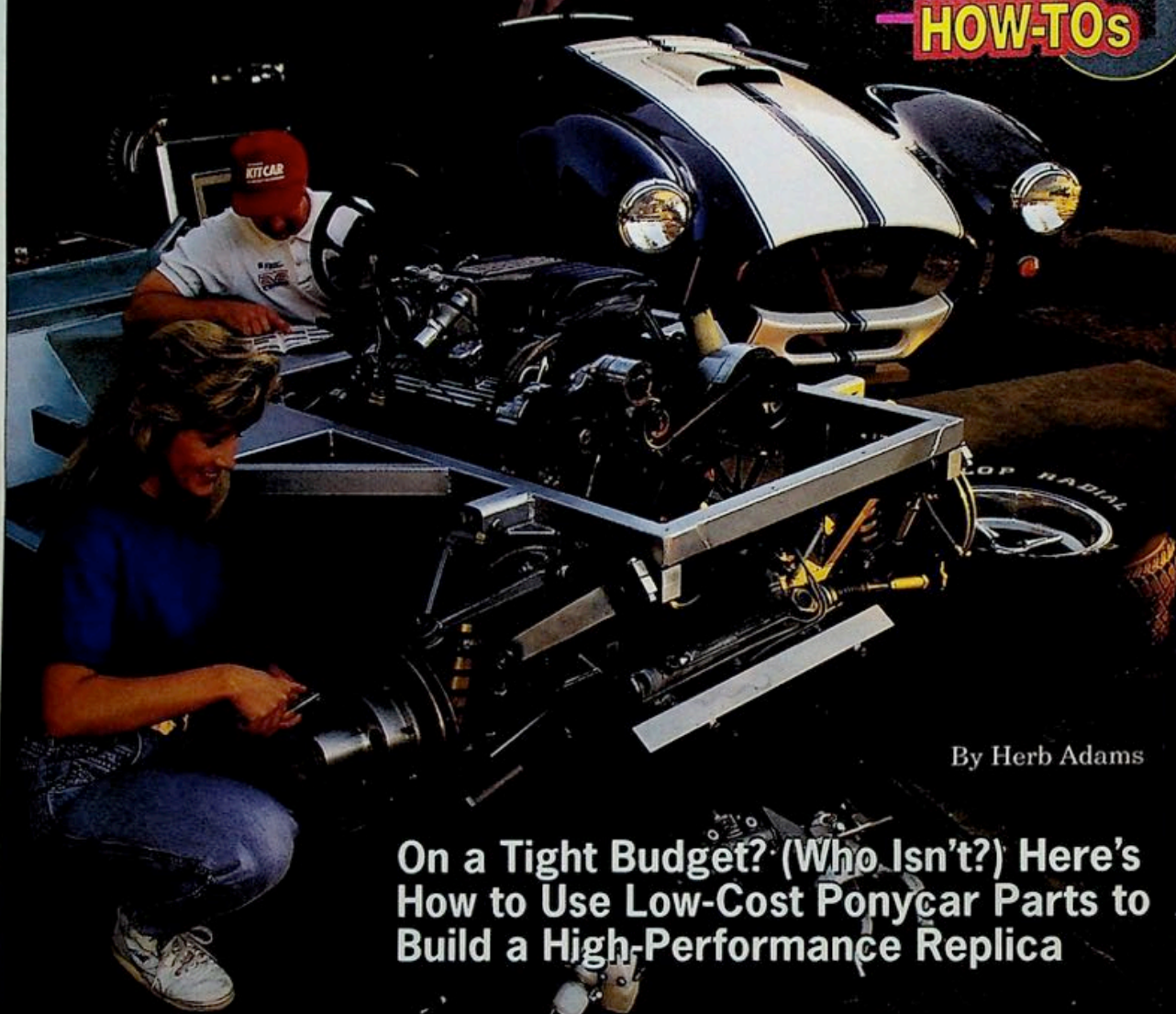
SOURCES

Mirror Image Motorworks
Dept. KC01
616 Wagon Wheel
Round Rock, TX 78671
512/218-8290

Street Dreams
Dept. KC01
7603 Levy Acres Cir. East
Burleson, TX 76028
817/465-9452

MUSTANG-DONOR COBRA

**KIT
HOW-TOs**



By Herb Adams

On a Tight Budget? (Who Isn't?) Here's How to Use Low-Cost Ponycar Parts to Build a High-Performance Replica

Cobra buyers are like any other car buyers—they want the most car for their money. But that means different things to different people. Some Cobra buyers are content with a car that merely looks like a Cobra; others want one that is as close to the original as possible; and still others want the best performance possible in a car that has a Cobra body shape.

Stuart Eccles of Reno is the latter type. He loves the appearance of the original 427 Cobra, but he

wants to use it on a modern chassis with a modern engine and transmission, and for the lowest possible cost. Fulfilling such personal requirements is not all that much of a problem in the kit car market, as long as you're willing to do some mixing and matching, and a little custom fabrication, too.

After considerable shopping and many evaluations, Stuart chose a Butler body and a V.S.E. chassis with a late-model fuel-injected V8 Mustang drivetrain. Like many buyers, he started out with the most

basic components and then upgraded them in the areas where he couldn't resist. Since Stuart insisted on a high-quality body and chassis, the only area left for potential cost savings was in the driveline. To do so, Stuart stuck to the concept of a single donor car. By using every possible part from a wrecked '92 5.0 Mustang (see chart 1), Stuart was able to save considerable money in building his Cobra. He also saved a lot of time locating parts by using this method.

Although most kit builders will

probably not be willing to assemble a custom-tailored project the way Stuart did, there are nonetheless many useful tips here that apply to a wide range of vehicles, Cobras or otherwise. Using a late-model wreck allowed Stuart to get newer, low-mileage parts. Buying the whole wreck also gives you the vehicle title and vehicle numbers. These are valuable items in states that have a rebodied-car registration program.

Stuart chose the late-model Mustang as his donor car because he was required by the Nevada DMV to have an emissions-legal engine. That's not the only reason, though. With an output of 225 hp, the power-to-weight ratio will be 10:1 in the lightweight body and chassis Stuart decided to use. Late-model Mustangs are fast at 3200 pounds; we're eager to see how fast his Cobra will be at 2200 pounds.

To keep the Mustang powertrain emissions legal, all the smog systems must remain intact. This includes the catalytic converters, the engine wiring harness and the ECM

control unit (often referred to simply as the computer). There are many aftermarket parts available to increase the power of the Mustang

CHART 1 SALVAGING A MUSTANG DONOR

By choosing a wreck with front end damage (actually a recovered stolen car obtained from an insurance company), Stuart was able to use the following parts:

- 225hp 5.0 V8 with emissions equipment
- automatic transmission
- wiring harness with electronic control module (ECM)
- rearend and driveshaft (shortened)
- wheels and tires
- fuel tank and electric pump
- steering gear
- seats and tracks
- dash instruments

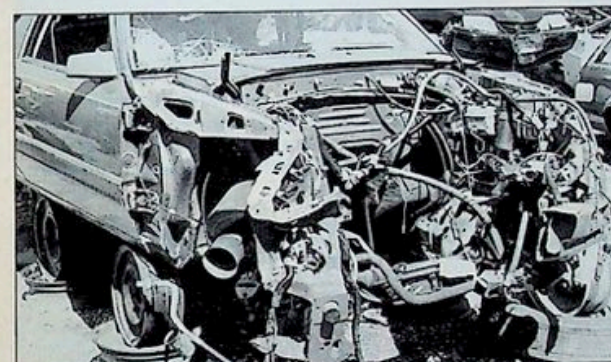
Total cost: less than \$4500.

engine, but Stuart decided to leave it stock at this time.

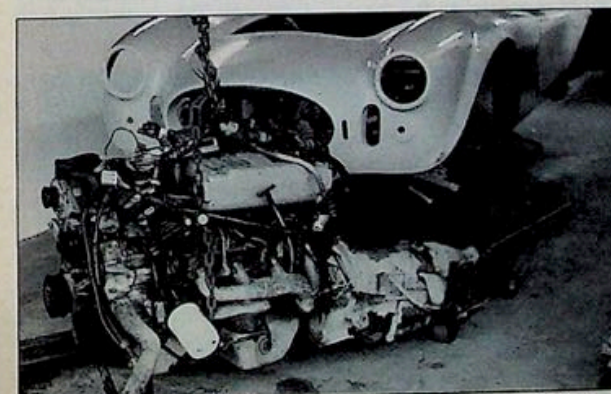
Chassis Choices

By using the V.S.E. chassis, Stuart got a lightweight chassis with many advantages over the typical Cobra ladder-type frames. The backbone frame used on the V.S.E. chassis provides excellent torsional stiffness while providing generous interior room. A stiff frame allows the use of very soft springs and shocks for a smooth ride while eliminating cowl shake and body cracks.

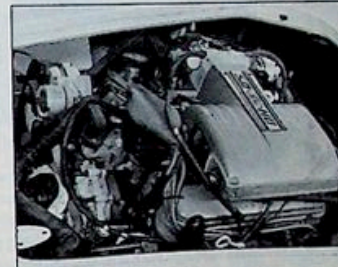
Stuart installed the complete V.S.E. front suspension (see chart 2) because he wanted the modern race tech parts with the computer-checked geometry. At the rear Stuart used his donor car parts to save money. By bolting in the complete Mustang rearend (upgraded, as shown in the photos) with the rear brakes, Stuart saved almost \$2000 off the normal V.S.E. rear suspension price (see chart 2). By using Mustang steering gear and finding a Fiero steering column, he saved



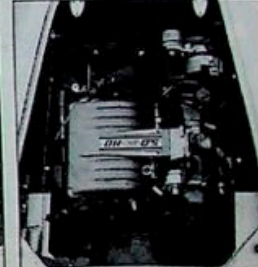
One person's trash is a kit builder's treasure. A wrecked Mustang can provide the engine, transmission, rearend and steering gear. Be sure to get all the emissions-related equipment too, such as the wiring harness, converters and computer module.



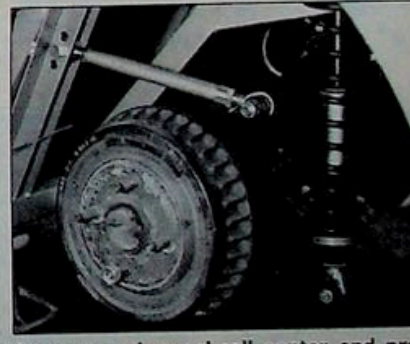
Here's the 5.0 V8 with automatic tranny ready to install. A front-sump oil pan had to be installed later so the engine could be lowered to allow the fuel-injection manifold to clear the hood without a scoop.



The engine was also moved slightly forward for a 50/50 front to rear weight distribution.



Although the stock Mustang live axle was installed, the axle brackets were replaced with V.S.E. pieces and welded on the top so a Satchell Link setup could be used. This modification increases the amount of anti-squat for better



acceleration and also lowers the real roll center and provides better support for the ends of the axle. The four-bolt axle shafts were later replaced with five-bolt units for the disc brake conversion.

MUSTANG-DONOR COBRA

another \$1000.

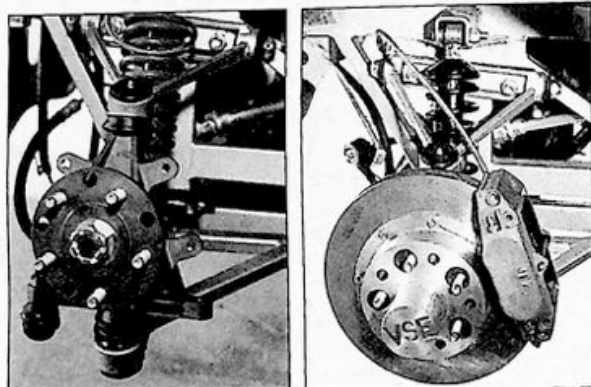
Stuart selected the Butler body because it has a built-in steel cage that surrounds the driver. Assembler Hal Mallett did have to make a few modifications in this first-time mating of a Butler body and V.S.E. chassis. Butler has made inner panels available that allow the body to drop on the V.S.E. chassis, but the company will only sell its body already installed on the frame. This service includes welding the door hinges and latch plates to the chassis (see chart 3).

A Few Extras, of Course

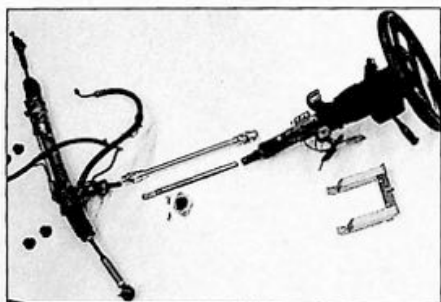
Although Stuart was a price-conscious buyer, he also wanted the best Cobra he could afford. One of the advantages of building your own car is that you can make it the way you want it. By spending additional money in certain places, you can custom build the car you want. Stuart wanted all the rubber he could get. He chose BFGoodrich T/A's measuring 245/50 in the front and 275/50 in the rear. These tires will be mounted on Compomotive 8x16 and 10x16 wheels. Extra cost for wheels and tires: \$2250.

Since Stuart wanted the full Cobra look he optioned for chromed side pipes (\$950). While the side pipes look great, they have some problems on a car that is driven daily, as Stuart intends to do. Burned legs and the constant noise

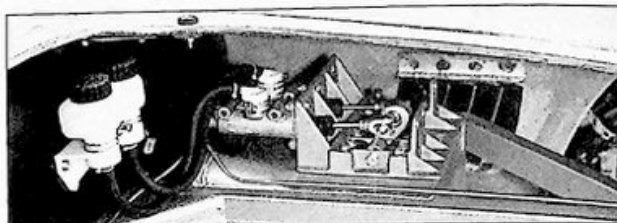
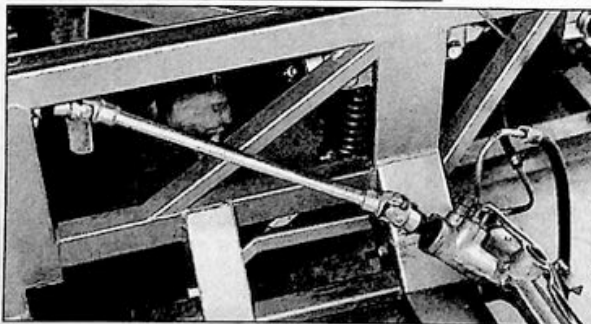
V.S.E. CHASSIS COMPONENTS	
● Steel backbone frame setup for a live-axle rear end	\$3000
● Complete race-quality front suspension with knuckles, hubs, control arms, springs, shocks and stabilizer bar	\$4000
● Rear suspension package without the rear axle (includes axle brackets, control arms, springs, shocks and stabilizer bar)	\$2000
● Steering package without the steering gear and column	\$500
● Front brake package (includes calipers, rotors, pedal assembly, lines, hoses and fittings)	\$1500
● Radiator with mounts	\$500
Total	\$11,500



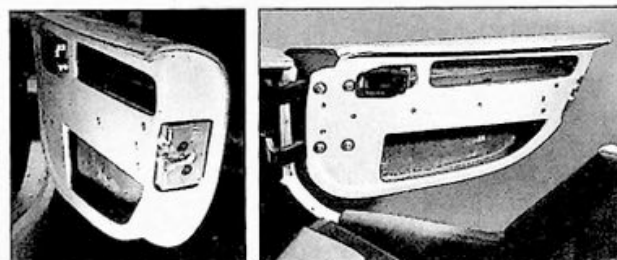
This is the V.S.E. front end before and after brake installation. The front knuckle is cast stainless steel for strength and light weight. The suspension geometry of the A-arms is checked on a computer to ensure maximum roadholding.



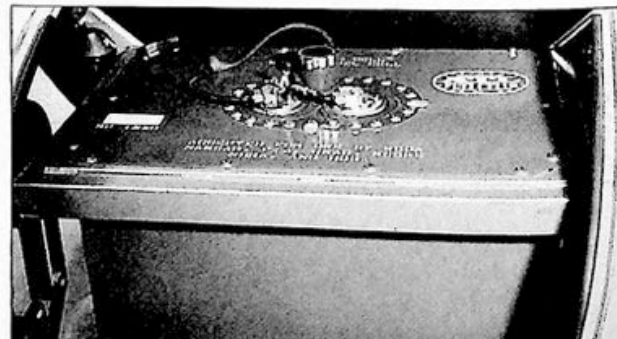
The Mustang's steering gear was used, along with a Fiero steering column and V.S.E. connecting hardware.



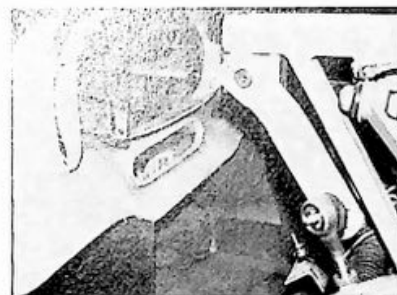
V.S.E.'s pedal assembly has Tilton remote-fill cylinders, and the pedals have seals to keep engine fumes out of the cockpit. The whole assembly can be moved fore or aft to accommodate different drivers. A throttle pedal which operates through a cable is also included.



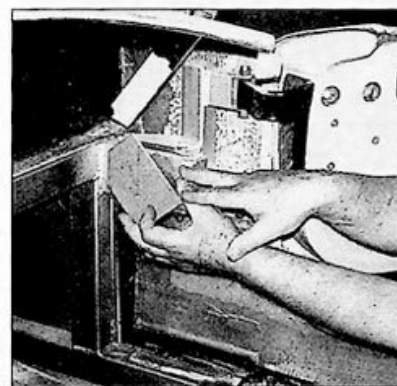
The Butler body features door beams with heavy-duty hinges mounted to the frame of the car. The door latch has a removable release.



Although the stock Mustang fuel tank could be used, Stuart intends to go racing, so he installed a 22-gallon ATL fuel cell with the Mustang pump, pickup and fuel gauge fitted on the top plate.



One of the challenges of fitting the Butler body on the V.S.E. frame was filling the gaps between the bumpers and the frame. Builder Hal Mallett solved this by fabricating filler pieces out of 1/4-inch steel plate.



Other custom-fabricated items included the brackets for the windshield posts. Here a cardboard mockup is checked for fit prior to fabrication and welding.

CHART 3 BUTLER'S BODY

The body parts Stuart bought from Butler are listed here with their cost:

● Basic 427 Cobra body (with doors, hood, and deck lid latched and hinged; includes labor to mount body to V.S.E. chassis)	\$6000
● Windshield	\$800
● Windshield wiper system	\$325
● Front and rear bumper uprights with brackets	\$400
● Complete lighting package	\$550
Total	\$8075

in your left ear are the kinds of things that can grow old in a hurry. To eliminate these problems and simplify the exhaust system with the mandatory catalytic converters, he decided to make the side pipes non-functional. He attached them to the frame and routed the exhaust out the back where it won't be seen.

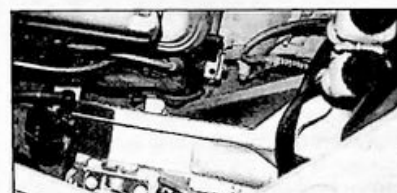
Even though the car will be used mainly on the street, Stuart expects



As any experienced kit builder knows, some custom fitting is invariably required. The passenger door had to be built up for a uniform fit. Hal used a caliper to measure the gap.



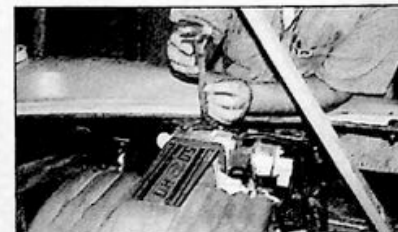
Even a good body may require some extra prep work for a proper fit. The rear deck had to be built up to match the contour of the deck lid and the opening built up to make the gap uniform.



Tight clearances between the footwells and exhaust system required some modifications. An earlier '65 exhaust manifold allowed the pipes to be routed over the top of the transmission. The catalytic converters were installed just forward of the rear axle.

someday to race his Cobra in SCCA events, so he optioned for a fuel cell (\$600) and a SCCA type rollbar (\$500). The fuel cell is built-in and requires that the Mustang fuel pump be adapted. The filler will be inside the limited-size trunk. Most late-model Mustangs still use drum rear brakes. Since Stuart wanted a modern chassis he chose to convert the rear axle with a disc brake package (\$900) from Stainless Steel Brakes.

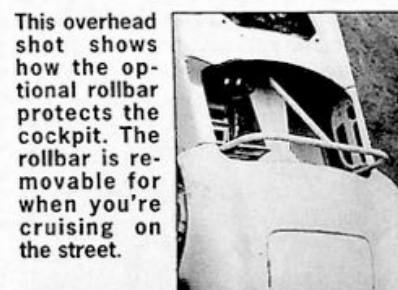
From the above you can see how it is possible to assemble a top-quality Cobra for less than \$25,000 in body, chassis and driveline parts. Of course, you have to assemble it yourself, and it still needs to be painted and upholstered. If you can limit yourself on the extra-cost items, your Cobra should look, handle and run with the best, but at a reasonable price. **KC**



Custom-built cars usually require several custom mods. Despite our lowering of the engine by using a front-sump oil pan, the fuel induction system still hit the hood. The EGR housing and throttle position sensor boss had to be shaved by a 1/2 inch. The calipers showed a space of 1/4 inch.



V.S.E.'s seats provide additional side support but do require some modification to make them adjustable. Also, the door sills had to be shaved for additional clearance.



SOURCES

Butler Racing, Inc.
Dept. KC01
103 Santa Felicia Dr.
Goleta, CA 93117
805/685-3535

Ford Motorsports/S.V.O.
Dept. KC01
44020 N. Groesbeck Hwy.
Mt. Clemens, MI 48083
313/337-1356

Hal Mallett
Dept. KC01
1479 Hudson Way
Livermore, CA 94550
510/443-5581

V.S.E., Inc.
Dept. KC01
23865 Fairfield Pl.
Carmel, CA 93923
408/649-8423

KIT HOW-TOs 50+ Buildup Tips & Tricks

With a Whole Pile of Practical Products to Help You Complete Your Kit

By Steve Temple

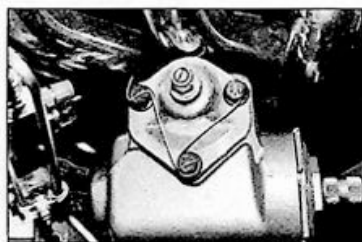
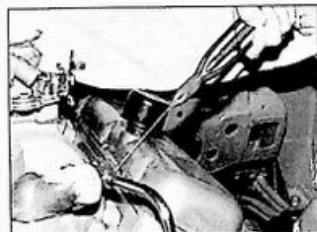
Probably one of the most annoying things about assembling a kit car is encountering that one little task that seems to loom larger than it should, that stumps you on how to proceed any further. You lie awake nights imagining different solutions, and you still can't come up with the right answer. Or

maybe your project falls under the old saying "For want of a nail, the kingdom was lost." You just can't find that peculiar part or tool you need.

Well, we certainly sympathize with you, having been down the same road more times than we care to admit, so we thought you'd like to see a collection of things we've found over the years that might make your project go a little easier. This type of feature is one of our most popular. We try to run as many tech tips as often as possible, so if you have some, send them in with a snapshot and share the wealth with your fellow kit builders.

Squeak, Rattle and Roll

When you hear an irritating noise from under the hood, don't just turn up the radio. Go on a tightening tour. After a few thousand miles on the road, your car has gone through enough bumps and jolts for various components to settle into place. You can walk around the car with a screwdriver and ratchet and probably get a half-turn on almost every screw or nut you can get at. Sometimes there's a rattle that, try as you might, you can't seem to locate. Break out the creeper dolly and slide under the car. Shake everything you can get your hands on. A component may rattle when cold but tighten up at operating temperature. Once you've found that loose part, keep the bolts from backing out with some safety-lock wire on the heads, and twist it tight.



The Heat's On

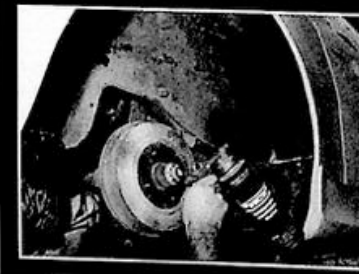
Our friend Paul Bennett of Bennett Racing (510/782-0705) recently gave us a brief shop tour and revealed how he keeps his Cobras cool. He swears by Griffin aluminum radiators, which are far more efficient than standard

brass-and-copper units. He also says a common problem with front-mounted oil coolers is breaking

loose at the bottom. He says they should be secured from top to bottom with some sort of bracing. On this car, he ran two vertical bolts on each side from the top to the bottom and into the frame.

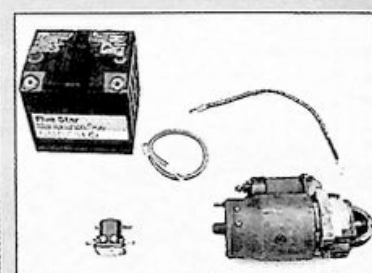
Wear Your Undercoat

One giveaway that your new rebody kit is on an older donor car is around the wheelwells on the frame. Cover up those funky areas and the road rash with rubberized black underseal. Just a few quick applications and everybody will think you're driving a brand-new car.

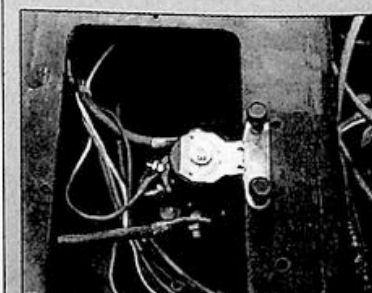


Remote Control

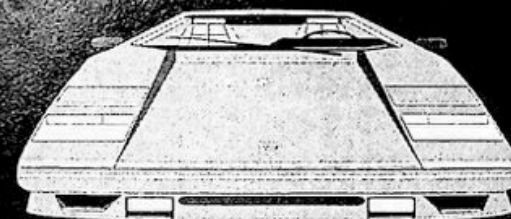
Having trouble restarting your engine? If the starter solenoid is located near the engine or exhaust system, it may be baking too



much. If you install it in a remote location away from the starter itself, you can prolong solenoid life and reduce the possibility of hot-restart problems. Also, installing the solenoid in a more accessible location makes service easier. To hook one up, just about any Ford V8-type will do, and be sure to use 14-gauge wire to connect the positive battery cable to the solenoid and starter. The solenoid mount does not have to make a ground connection, so fastening it to fiberglass is OK.



This is a good rebody.



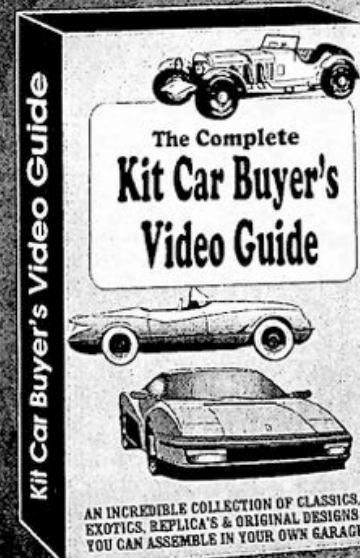
This is a bad one.



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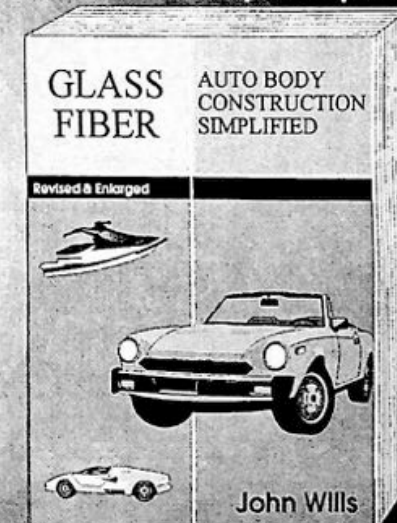


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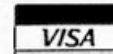
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Squeeze Play

Getting those new rebody panels to line up can be a real pain. C-clamps and large-jaw locking pliers can make the job a lot easier. Once you have the panels in place, use sheetmetal screws to secure them until the adhesive or fiberglass resin sets up. Then back out the screws and cover the holes with body filler.



Groovy Fasteners

Vibration and repeated heating and cooling can loosen bolts. If you don't like the look of lock wires or using thread-lock glue and need to tighten things down, try a Stage 8 Groove Lock Fastener (800/843-783). This reusable part consists of a retainer washer that slips over a notched bolt head and an E-clip that holds things in place. This fastener is particularly useful on CV-joints and intake and exhaust manifold studs.

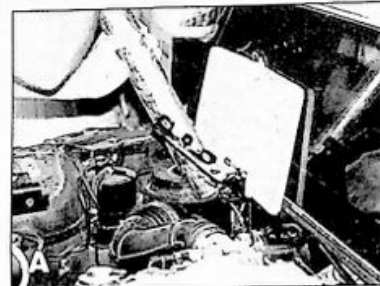
Detector Protector

One of the neat things about owning a fiberglass-bodied kit car is that you can mount a radar detector in a remote or concealed location. That's because fiberglass is "transparent" to microwave transmissions (what do you think radar domes are made of?). Owners of hi-po Cobras may especially appreciate this novel way of installing an "early warning system."



Fiero Factatums

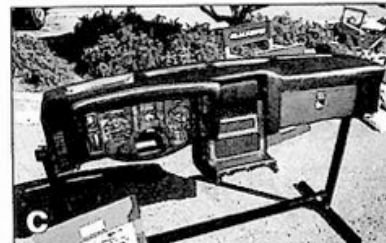
Our friend Dan Campbell at PISA Corp. (602/376-1550)—which sells the Artero, Scorpion and Group XTC Fiero rebody kits—sent



us a couple of really useful tips that apply to most Fiero conversions. When you are stripping the donor car, it's easy to break the rear window with the spring-loaded tension bars on the rear deck hinges. To prevent this, first place a piece of plywood (A) between the window



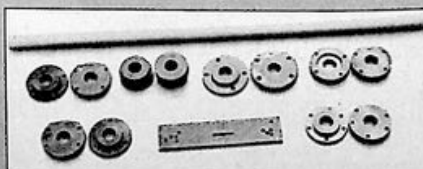
and hinges in case the tension bar slips free. Also, slide a 2- to 3-foot piece of 1-inch diameter pipe over the tension bar for extra leverage before removing the hinge assembly. Also, many Fiero conversions require the gas-filler tube to be cut and extended. If you use a hacksaw, it may tear the metal and create filings which can fall into the tank, and clog your fuel system. A chain cutter (B), available from Snap-On for about \$15, makes the job of cutting much easier, and without filings. Simply wrap the chain around the filler tube—or whatever type of tubing you need to cut—and hook it to the cutter's handle. Move the



handle back and forth about 20 degrees and tighten the chain as the cutting groove deepens until the piece of tubing falls off. PISA also offers a quick way to dress up a Fiero cockpit with its new dash kit (C). Simply unbolt the stock pieces, and the new dash slips right on in a matter of minutes.

Narrowing 9-inchers

A great many kits use the sturdy and popular Ford 9-inch live-axle rear end, but often a narrower width is necessary to make it fit. Alston now offers a precision jig and hub locator that assures precise alignment when modifying the width of rear end housings. A pinion alignment gauge included in the kit takes the guesswork out of locating the pinion centerline. Additional adapter kits are available for Dana, 12-bolt Chevy and 8 3/4-inch Mopar units, and Alston also offers a complete selection of chassis components for kit cars. Information: The Alston Group, Dept. KC01, 248 Depot St., Antioch, IL 60002, 708/395-3500.



Hose Solution

Integrity Coach Werks' Parts Department manager Jerry Van Horn (who sort of looks like Chuck Norris' brother) gets really tied up in his work. No, he's not demonstrating a new Kung Fu



weapon, but rather some new radiator hoses that are so flexible they can be tied in a knot. So if you're tied in knots over trying to find that funny hose with just the right bend for your kit's engine compartment, call Jerry at 407/288-0068. A number of diameters are available, and costs range from \$6 to \$9 per foot.

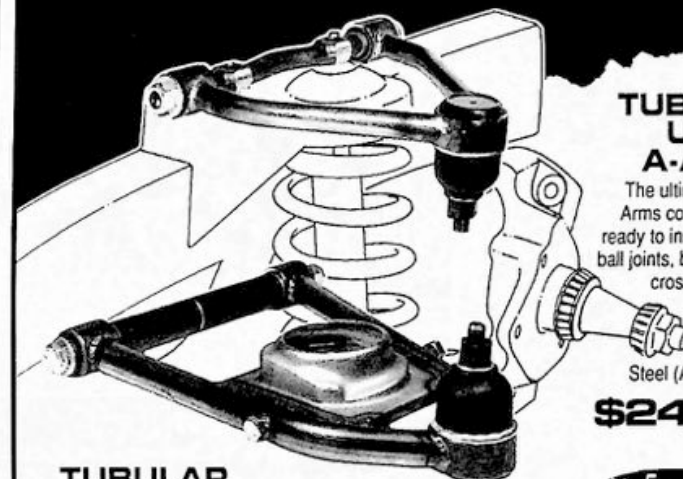
Getting Unstuck

What kit builder hasn't struggled over removing a seized bolt from a donor car? If no amount of penetrating oil will work, you may have to drill out the bolt. The Drill Guide is claimed to provide positive alignment with the bolt centerline to make this job easier. Information: Dewco, Dept. KC01, 404 Newport Ave., S. Attleboro, MA 02703, 617/376-4530.



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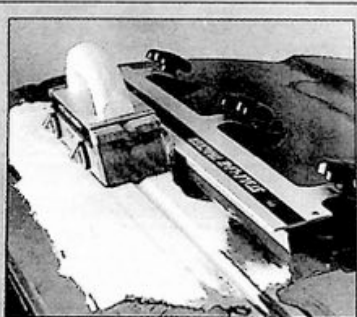
50+ Buildup Tips & Tricks

Label Me

If you're meticulous about your dash or you simply can't remember what that flashing little light means, check out these press-on dash plaques. They can be cut easily with scissors and come with a tenacious adhesive on the back.

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Roadster owners will also appreciate the ultraviolet-resistant coating. Information: Stats & Stuff Co., Dept. KC01, 3040 Atwater Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90039, 800/662-3888.

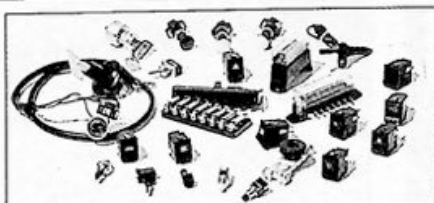
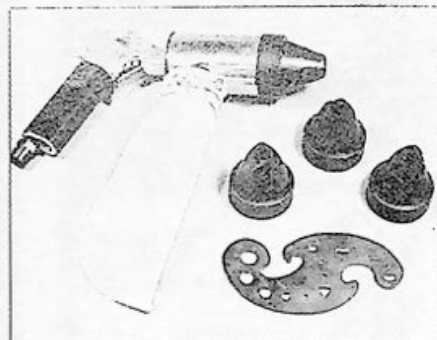


Contour Sanding

Having trouble getting the body lines to even up? The Style-Liner Multi-Contour Sander has adjustable rubber blades that conform to a vehicle's style lines for easy sanding of grooves and other difficult areas. Included is the Tracker/Glass Handler, which serves as a guide to ensure the sander follows a straight line, and it also can be used for glass removal and replacement. Style-Line (706/354-6782) manufactures a number of other specialty sanders too.

Master Blaster

If you need to remove small areas of paint and rust but don't like the mess of strippers or large sandblasters, check out GearBox Grannie's Spot Blaster. Its abrasive is contained within the tool and recirculates for use over and over again. For a free catalog, contact GearBox Grannie's, Dept. KC01, 492 W. Second St., Ste. 204, Xenia, OH 45385, 513/372-1541.

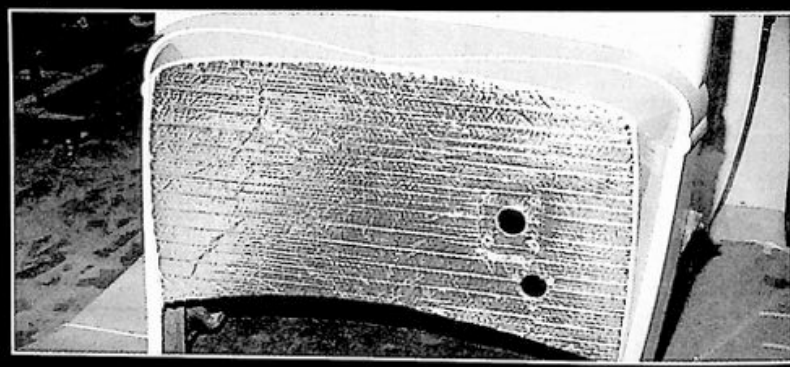


Turned On

For that really authentic look in your Cobra replica or any other kit with a veddy British look, you need to have the right switches. Brooklands, Inc. (305/776-2748) carries a huge range of original Lucas toggle switches, ignition-key switches and ceramic fuse boxes. For the budget-minded, less expensive rocker switches are available too, and the company's 40-page catalog features numerous other components as well.

Beat the Heat

Fiberglass kit bodies readily conduct engine heat, so you need some shielding to keep the cockpit cool. The Cool-It Mat from Thermo-Tec (800/274-8437) features a tough mylar base, a thick spun-glass center layer and a quilted-foil facing and can be installed on the firewall or floorboards, or anywhere else heat and sound are problem.



Spicy Meatballs

When you're ready to hit the track, don't bother using sticky decals or painted-on numbers. Unique Motorcars' dealer Operations Plus (714/962-2776) now offers removable and reusable numbers and decals made of static-cling vinyl that won't come off even at high speed, but can be peeled off easily for storage.



Budget Cobra

Want that gennie look but can't afford the original parts? Check out Cobra Restorers Ltd.'s (404/427-0020) new "Valu-line" parts for Cobra replicas, in addition to the company's regular line of Classics components. You just might save some money and still maintain the right look for your kit.



Getting Wrenched

Some kit cars are notorious for having tight clearances in the engine compartment, but you should not have to hoist out the block just to change the spark plugs. Instead, try the Sidewinder Speedwrench (800/999-3405), which the manufacturer claims is ideal where space limits the handle's arc of travel or excessive repetitions are required for long bolts. One 360-degree turn of the T-handle is said to equal at least eight normal ratchet motions.



Cobra Rubber Match

Modern low-profile tires are great performers, but they don't always look right in the wheelwells of vintage replicas. For the right aspect ratio in a Cobra replica's tires, BFGoodrich's Comp T/A comes in a P275/50R16, just the size you need for the rear. A little easier to find is the Radial T/A P295/50R15. In the front, simply step down one size.



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Pinhole Filler

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Reference Work

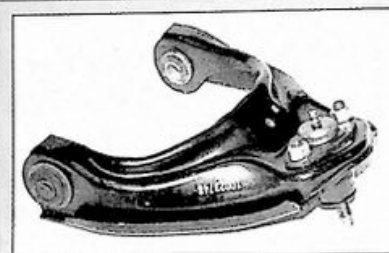
We can't cover every trick in the book for kit building, but there is a book with just about every trick: *Secrets of Buying and Building Your Specialty Car on a Small Budget*. This 100-page publication contains a wealth of information



on how to save money and build a kit, from the initial purchase to the last drop of paint. It also has a comprehensive list of clubs and assemblers, and it's an excellent resource for kit builders. To get your copy, which comes with a guarantee that you'll save a minimum of \$5000 by applying the methods described or your money is refunded, call Money Savers Group at 613/253-2573.

Oil Check

Found a really great used engine for your kit but not sure if it's about to grenade? Check out Smart Check (800/826-6071), a complete oil-testing service that will reveal engine wear in critical areas such as the bearings, bushings and cylinders. It also identifies contaminants, sediments and additives. Simply fill the sample bottle with the old engine oil and send it off to the lab in the pre-paid mailer. Results of spectrographic analysis are available within 48 hours for only \$22.95 plus shipping.

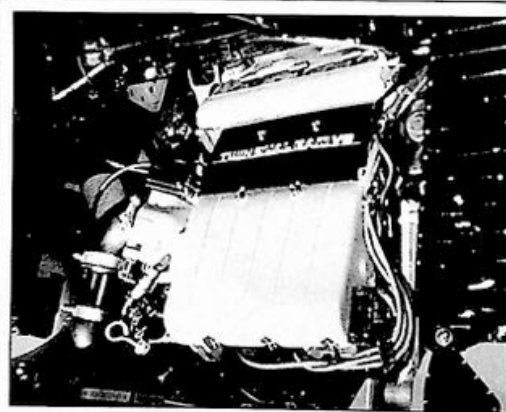
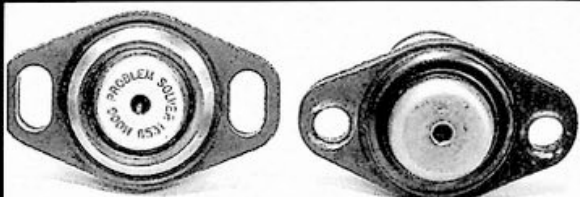


An Upper "A" for Effort

Because the '84-'87 Fiero front suspension was "borrowed" from another GM platform (uh, the Chevette), the range of caster and camber adjustment is, well, limited. GM has addressed this problem with a new upper A-arm design now available through GM Parts at any GM dealer. The new uppers (left arm, PN 14094449; right arm, PN 14094450) offer an additional 1.6 degrees of built-in positive camber. They are direct replacement parts and require no modification for installation.

It's a Ball

A rebodied Fiero often needs to be lowered with dropped spindles and/or cut springs for the right ride height, but camber adjustment, something the stock suspension doesn't have much of, becomes particularly important for correct handling. The Problem Solver upper ball joint (left, PN K5292) from Moog (800/325-8886) features slotted bolt holes that allow maximum adjustment in both directions.

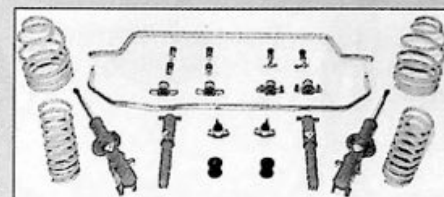


Turbo Tips

American Custom Engineering (303/259-4156) recommends that when adding a turbo to a Fiero or other donor car, it's better to connect the wastegate to the compressor side instead of using an exhaust turbine bypass configuration. Compressed air (boost) from the turbo compressor to the intake will then be controlled instantly rather than slowly by an exhaust wastegate. Also, this setup eliminates destructive compressor surge by not requiring excessive boost pressure to backflow through the compressor when the throttle is closed fast. Another problem with an exhaust wastegate is that it's exposed to high temperatures and gases, and as a result it may stick in the closed position, creating an overboost condition.

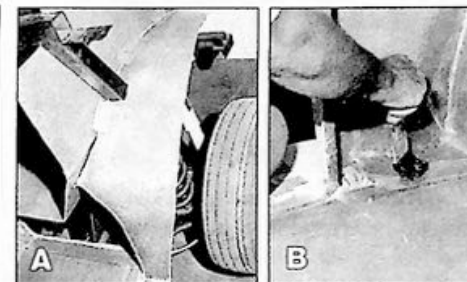
Pontiac Parts

If you're into one-stop shopping to improve the performance of your plasticized Pontiac Fiero, International Research Motorsports (301/948-3301) has a cohesive suspension package that translates into adhesive handling. With IRM's integrated system you can be sure that the shocks match the springs which match the sway bars and bushings.



Put a Sock on It

Kit car engine compartments can be very crowded, so much so that sensitive components such as spark plugs and wires are exposed to extreme heat. D&H Heat Technology (216/725-5665) has come up with a new double-layered fiberglass sock to protect exposed boots and plug wires. It also provides an easily visible indication of potential burn areas before they occur. Sold for \$4.94 each, the sock will stretch over irregular surfaces and can be rotated for longer life.



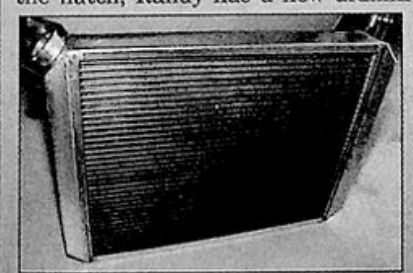
Duct Tape Tip

When fiberglassing wheelwell liners or other pieces to the body (A), hold them temporarily in place with duct tape and/or Pop rivets. Two- or 3-inch wide strips of fiberglass should be enough to bond the pieces together, depending on their size, but make sure you wet the cloth thoroughly with catalyzed resin (B) and press out any air bubbles with a brush or roller. At room temperature, the normal resin-to-catalyst ratio is 100:1, higher if it's hotter.

Engine Swap Secret

Cooling is an inherent problem with Fieros, be they stock, rebodied or re-engined. That's because the radiator is lower than the engine. Our buddy Randy Corson of Corson Motorcar Company, who sells one of the better Fiero body kits around, shared the following solution.

Purging the system of gas pockets is crucial, but nobody wants to go through the ridiculous hassle of jacking up the front of the car so the radiator cap and recovery tank are higher than the engine, then starting up the car, warming it up, shutting it off and letting it cool down several times. The simple trick is to relocate the water filler and recovery tank to the engine compartment to the highest point in the system. Make sure you plug the overflow line at the radiator. In most cases this will take care of overheating problems, but if it doesn't or you have a really hot mill under the hatch, Randy has a new aluminum, dual-core, double-pass radiator.



He says it's been tested in the Arizona heat with an engine pumping out 450 hp, and it still keeps things cool. Priced at \$420, the Corson hi-po radiator fits in the stock Fiero location and uses the standard fan and shroud. Information: Corson Motorcar Co., Dept. KC01, P.O. Box 14476, Scottsdale, AZ 85267, 602/375-2544.

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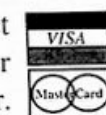
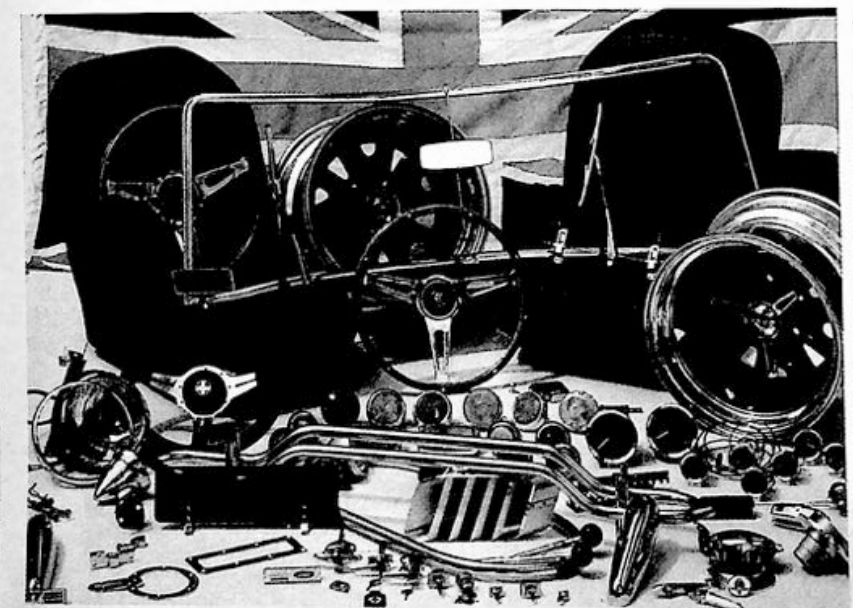
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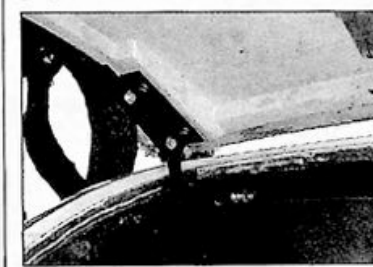
Stick It

Getting doors and lids to line up with the body with an even fit all around the edges is a lot easier if you simply wedge some pieces of a paint stick at regular intervals. Once the door or lid is in place, make your drill marks on the hinges.



Hole Shot

To make hinges easier to adjust, enlarge the bolt holes into oblong slots with a drill bit to allow some play in the fit.



Level With Me

When installing the engine in your kit, it's important to check the



angle. Of course, the frame itself must first be level on its jackstands.

Drilling Dangers

When you're drilling a hole through a double-sided fiberglass body part such as a door, it's easy to plunge through suddenly and damage the outer skin. To prevent this, place a block of wood



between the two skins. It should slow you down enough so you don't hit the second skin.

Tubular Spacers

If you need to make up a large distance between a bracket and a part, such as a steering column and cowl brace, use varying lengths of tubular spacers over the bolt to provide some reinforcement and angle adjustment.



Body Buddies

Whenever you have to pick up the body, make sure you have plenty of extra hands to help because the fiberglass can twist and crack if it's not well-supported at each corner.



Hole in the Wall Gang

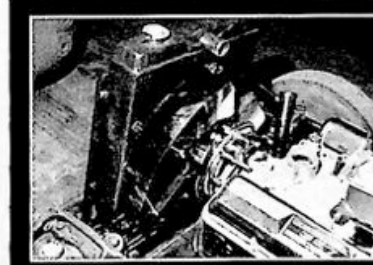
Whenever you pass wiring or hoses through bulkhead, make



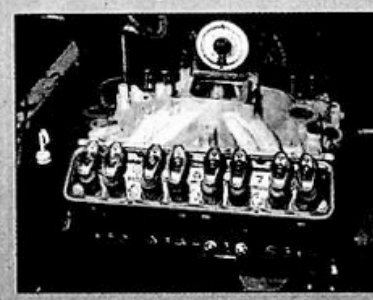
sure there's plenty of protection from chafing. Otherwise, vibration and ragged edges can eventually wear away at them.

Shrouded in Secrecy

If your radiator just doesn't cut it on a hot day with the A/C on and you don't have enough room for a bigger unit or enough money for an aluminum model, try forming a fan shroud to help feed the air more efficiently across the radiator fins. It just may do the trick.



Then place a leveling protractor on the carburetor mounting flange and check the angles both transversely



and longitudinally. On the latter, a 2- or 3-degree downward slope run-

ning aft is about right. Also, once the body is on the chassis and before the final fastening, use a long



level to doublecheck the evenness of the fit from side to side.



Chassis Troubleshooting

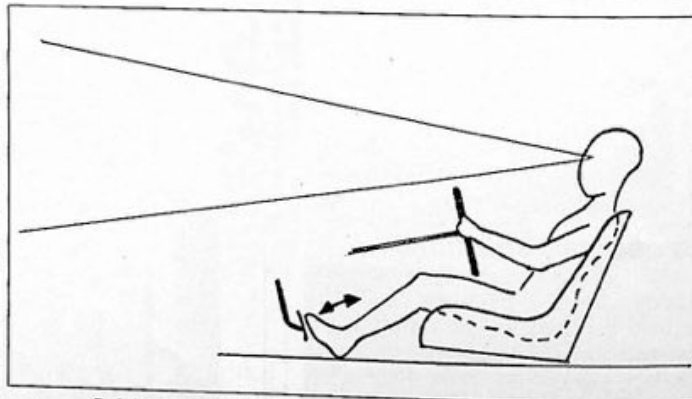
Some Tips on How to Improve the Handling and Roadholding of Your Kit Car

By Bob Egginton

You've worked long and hard to get your kit assembled, and now comes that thrilling moment when you pull it out on the road for the first time. You're rolling along fine with a big smile on your face, and suddenly you notice the front end is darting about as if it's got a mind of its own; or maybe the body is rolling like a ship in a storm; or in a curve, the pavement feels like ice even though it's a hot summer day. Sounds like your chassis needs some troubleshooting.

Before getting down to the nitty-gritty of tuning your suspension, we should make a distinction between handling and roadholding. Most car enthusiasts have their pet opinions on what constitutes good or bad handling. Some people will even voice their views on how to instantly cure your particular handling ailment. This offer may seem tempting, but be warned: Most quick fixes do not work and, at worst, may result in you and your vehicle making a quick and unexpected examination of the local greenery.

Let's start by defining handling as the ease with which a vehicle performs its intended duties while totally under



Driving comfort is of paramount importance if a car is to be driven to its full potential. Hands should be able to hold the steering wheel at 10 and 2 o'clock, with arms slightly bent so that rapid steering corrections can be made. The seat should be comfortable while offering good support. The pedals should permit ankle-only movement so that precise throttle, brake and clutch operation requires a minimum of effort and movement. Visibility should be good all around and as near to the vehicle's front as possible.

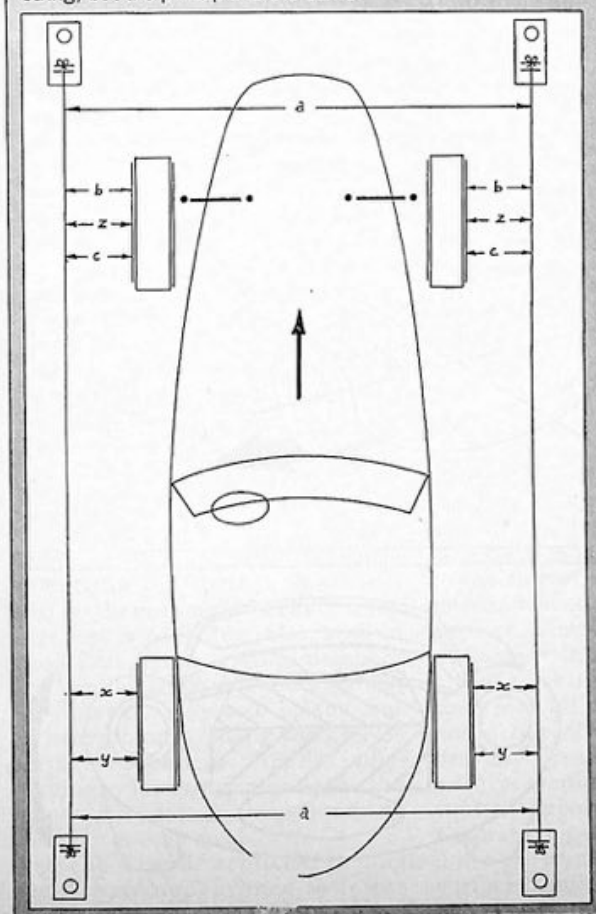
ILLUSTRATIONS: BOB EGGINTON

the control of the driver. Roadholding, however, is the ability a vehicle possesses to change direction or negotiate bends at the highest possible speed. In the quest for ultimate roadholding, the handling may become difficult. Extreme examples of this are the Indy or Grand Prix cars which stick to the road like limpets and corner with blinding quickness, but are very difficult to drive at almost any speed and require large amounts of skill and

How to Get a Line on Your Alignment

The string and oil can method of alignment checking is useful and inexpensive for kit builders. Cans are used to get the string as near to hub height as possible, but axle stands could be substituted. The string must be tight. All matching letters in the diagram must end up with equal measurements. Measurements are made to a sound section of the wheel rim. First set "a" and keep checking it through all operations. Next set "x" and "y" by moving the cans carefully until they equal out. When satisfactory, carefully check to the center of the front hubs at "z." If these are not equal, the rear axle is not following the front and the vehicle is running crab-wise. Double check the measurements. If more than 2 millimeters show up, you have a problem. Remember that the axle can be either displaced sideways or twisted in the chassis, maybe both, so check the strings to see if they remain parallel and point in the same direction as the car.

If all is well, check "b" and "c" on each wheel. The "b" figure should equal plus or minus half the specified toe-in or toe-out. Adjustments can be made on track rods. If you cannot make the vehicle square up, visit a good alignment shop to find out why, and then tackle your manufacturer. Pros sometimes substitute solid edges or even laser beams for string, but the principle is the same.



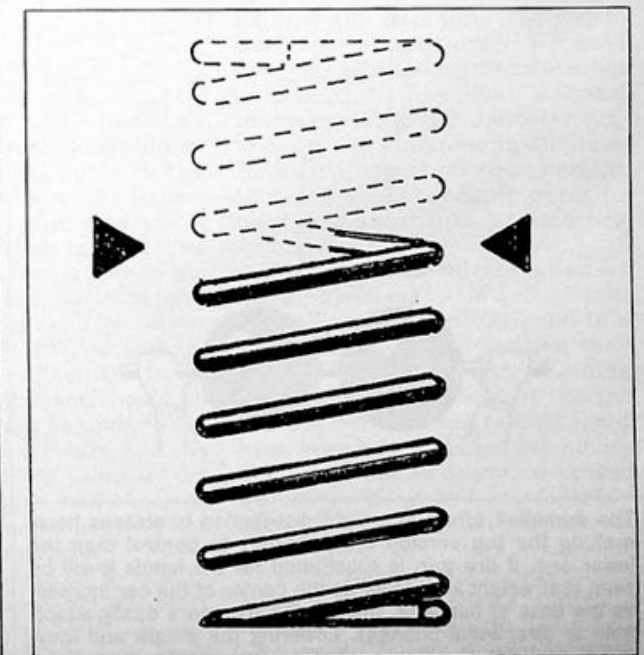
good muscle power. The aim of the kit builder should be to get as near as possible to the ideal combination of good roadholding traits while improving the driver's ability to comfortably control the vehicle. As a general rule, a vehicle that is "driver friendly" can be driven more quickly and safely than one in which the driver is uncomfortable.

FUNDAMENTAL FIXES

What can be done to improve your car's handling and roadholding ability? We will start with some basic stuff that many readers already know but should be emphasized. If you're going to analyze the way a vehicle behaves, you must be securely attached inside it. The seat must be set square to the vehicle's direction of travel and should support you well in the hips and back region. Padding should be the minimum that comfort allows, and the frame must be firmly attached to the floor. Otherwise, how do you know what is happening to the rest of the vehicle if the component you are sitting in is moving independently? Seat belts should pull you firmly and comfortably into the seat, and your driving position must be ergonomically correct (see diagram for details).

Now that we're sitting comfortably, let's consider the tires. These are the only things between you and the pavement. There has been a sharp trend over recent years to adopt low-profile tires, which have very shallow sidewall heights. They produce good response to steering angle changes but lack the compliance of their taller brothers. As a result, low-profile tires have a tendency to dance over bumps on the road. Unless your kit uses a sophisticated suspension system, the stiff walls allow the low-profile tire to tip in relation to the road surface during vertical wheel travel, losing potential grip area, while the taller, more flexible unit maintains a larger tread contact. Accompanying this is a lack of damping with the low wall, which can cause a harsh ride and feedback into the steering.

Although this may be a somewhat simplistic explanation of a very complex subject, suffice it to say that with the relatively basic suspensions found in many kit cars, the use of low tire walls should be considered carefully.



Springs should never be cut without careful consideration since the reduction in their wire length causes stiffening.

Chassis Troubleshooting

After all, low-profile tires did not even exist when many of the suspension systems currently in use on kit cars were designed, and they may not even look right in the wheelwells of some vintage or classic replicas.

WHEEL WOES

On the related subject of wheels, since the mid '60s there has been a trend toward wider rims. Although this has helped greatly in stabilizing the tire-to-road contact patch, an increase in wheel width or offset can produce some nasty side effects: The farther the wheel sticks out from the suspension and steering pivots the more leverage it can exert on them, which can lead to premature wear and even failure of bushings vital to keeping the suspension located and of wheel bearings not designed for such loadings.

The concern doesn't end there,

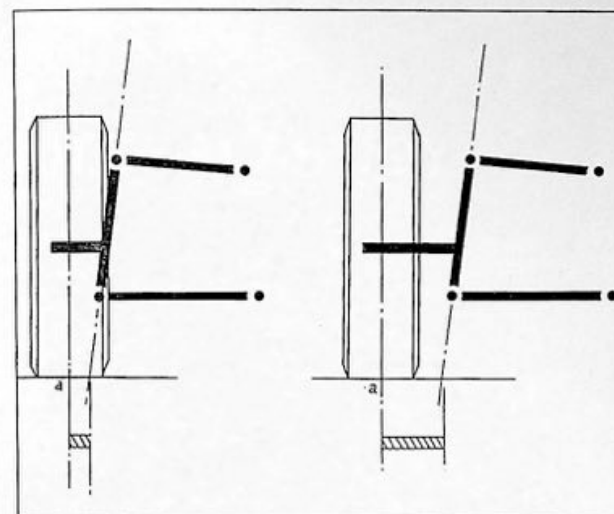
because most steering geometry is designed with the contact-patch center on or slightly outside the axis of the kingpin (note diagram). This system, known as "center point steering," is instigated so that when the steering is turned the wheel rotates approximately around its vertical centerline. If the contact-patch center point is moved outward, away from the kingpin, the wheel will then prescribe an arc around the axis point. This phenomenon leads to heavy steering, with excessive tire scrubbing and wear. In addition, due to the possibility of leverage between the tire and kingpin axis, any undulations in the road can be fed back into the steering. This feedback is transmitted to the other wheel, causing the car to "jink" about while at the same time snatching the steering wheel in the driver's hands.

Generally, when designing a road-going car, we aim for a wheelcenter-to-kingpin axis point between zero and 2 inches. Much more than this may cause problems.

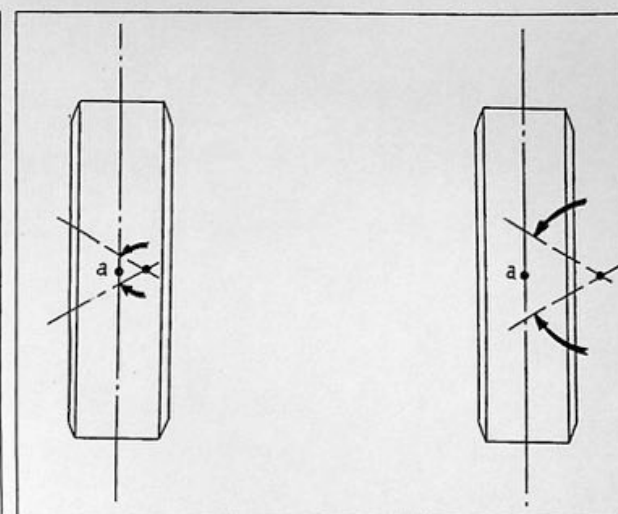
SHOCKS TO THE SYSTEM

The majority of kit cars use suspensions adapted from existing vehicles, but the problem with this is that rarely do the kits weigh the same or have the same weight distribution as the donor. The result is that wheel movement often differs from the ideal, and if the original springs and dampers (shock absorbers) are used, these units may not perform as they should, unless weight distribution is similar.

Springs should be soft enough to allow sufficient wheel movement, yet stiff enough to prevent the vehicle from wallowing like a whale. Although it's not a foolproof method, try pressing on the fenders above the wheel. You should be able to move the suspension down 1½ to 2 inches with little trouble, and then it should rise back more slowly as the shocks gradually release the compressed spring. If it pushes down easily, the springs may be too soft; if it will hardly move, they are



Excessive wheel offset can be a major problem. If the offset is too great, not only does the tire contact-patch center point (a) prescribe an arc around the kingpin axis, but it also travels farther for any given steering angle. This



causes heavy steering, feedback of jolts through the steering wheel and premature tire wear. Widening the wheel rims outwards produces the same effects.

definitely too stiff. If the car bounds up and down after release, better shock absorbers may be required.

ANTIGRAVITY CONTROLS

As a rule, if a car is too softly sprung, the handling will feel very sluggish and imprecise, especially in slalom-type turns. If the springs are too stiff, the car will feel skittish and unpredictable. Remember, the shocks should be used only for damping the spring oscillations and not as a springing medium, so don't be tempted to fit stiffer shocks without careful consideration, for the problem probably lies elsewhere.

Almost everybody agrees that both roadholding and handling can be improved by lowering a vehicle's center of gravity. By getting the mass of weight nearer to the ground there is less tendency for the vehicle to roll and pitch and, as a result, produce unsatisfactory wheel attitudes. If the whole body and chassis unit can be lowered over the wheels, that is good, but a few words of warning are in order. Remember that lowering the vehicle by cutting the springs down will stiffen them simply because they have less wire to flex. Also, keep in mind that if the original dampers are kept with shortened springs, the dampers may well bottom out on heavy bumps, doing themselves permanent damage. Finally, indiscriminate lowering may upset the suspension geometry, which may do more harm than good.

In the case of replicas, it may spoil their appearance to lower them too much. A good alternative

is to have a close look at which items within the car could be usefully placed lower or relocated for even weight distribution: heavy items such as batteries, spare wheels and so on. This exercise is particularly relevant for items like fuel tanks. They change weight during operation, which produces a degree of unpredictability in handling. Also, when moving heavy items, remember they are best kept within the confines of the four wheels and should not be stuck out at either end or side where they will produce an increase in polar moment, acting like dumbbell weights to swing the car about its axis (see illustrations).

STRINGING CANS

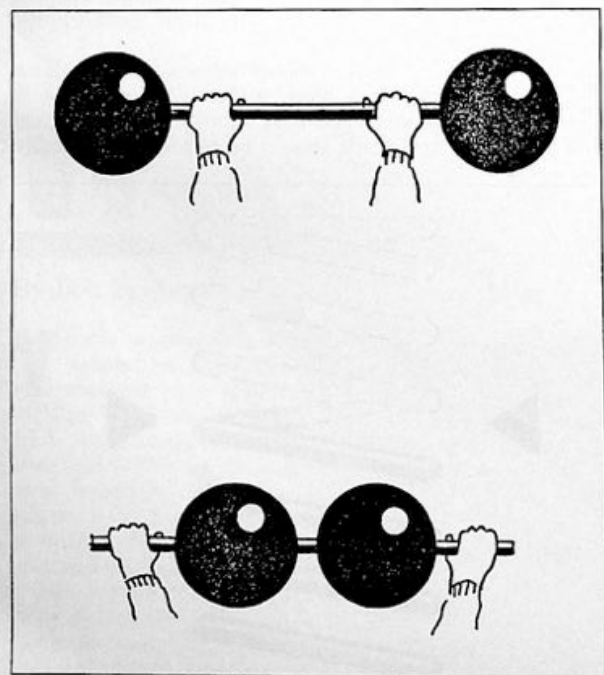
Obviously the most important aspect of determining which direction your vehicle is going is the steering, and it is of major importance that this set of components is functioning to the best of its ability. There must be no excess play in the steering rack or box, ball joints or any of the linkages. The wheel alignment must be true, not just set to the correct toe-in, and the front-to-rear wheel alignment should be checked. Checks can be undertaken at home with a little care and the aid of nothing more complicated than four oil cans, a ball of string and a rule. The accompanying box best describes the method.

Care should be taken to ensure that the front wheels do not steer themselves during their up and down movement. If they do, road surface bumps will steer the wheels and change the car's direction. This

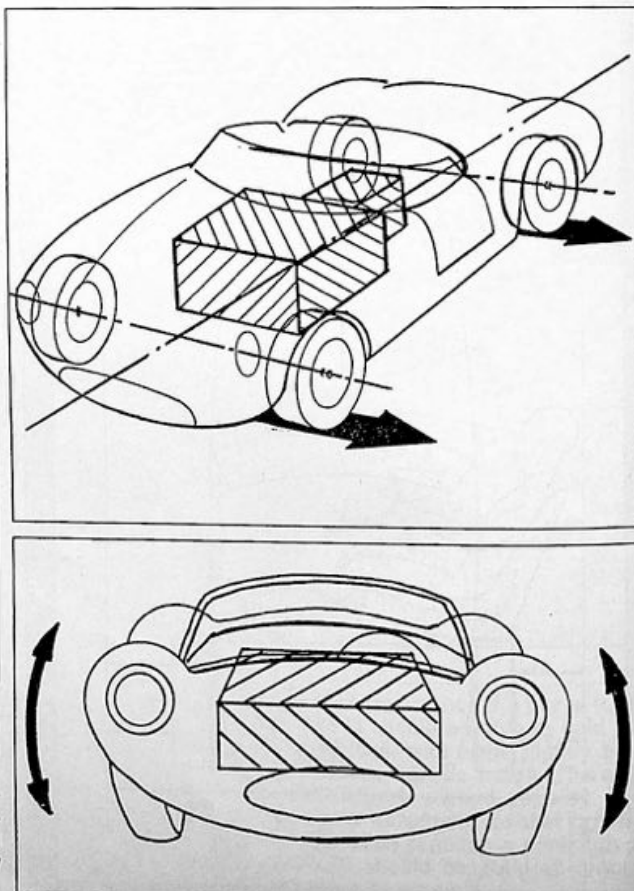
phenomenon, known as bump-steer or toe-steer, is a product of incorrect steering linkage placement and will be covered in detail in a future article.

Antisway bars or rollbars are an area where gains in both handling and roadholding can be made if used with moderation and care. Assuming that the rest of your vehicle is in good order, the general rule is as follows: If a vehicle suffers from a lack of grip at one end, then an anti-rollbar should be fitted or increased in diameter at the other. This is not to say that fitting them at both ends will necessarily improve the total grip. The watchword here is moderation. We won't bore you with the mathematics, but suffice it to say that a small increase in the bar diameter produces a large increase in stiffness. It is also important to remember that anti-rollbars should never be used as a substitute for incorrect springs.

Now, let's summarize what we have discussed. When Nigel Mansell or Emerson Fittipaldi talk about balance and handling they are most concerned with obtaining the ultimate grip, which is not the same as what we are talking about here. We are considering drivability and being able to operate a vehicle quickly, safely and comfortably between two points, although sometimes these requirements run side by side. Each of the points mentioned should be looked at individually and evaluated for its merit after modification. Remember that slow and steady progress will make you quick and safe. **KC**

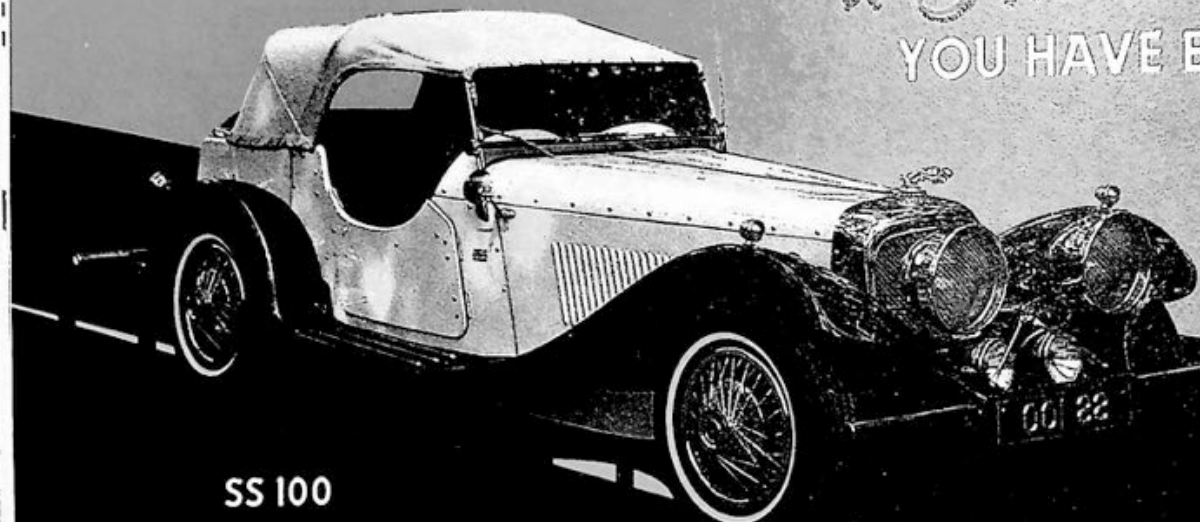


The dumbbell effect of weight distribution is obvious here, making the top version much harder to control than the lower one. If tire grip is substituted for the hands it will be seen that weight kept towards the center of the car increases the ease of handling, making the car more easily adaptable to directional changes. Lowering the weight and moving it towards the car centerline has similar beneficial effects, allowing the car's suspension to help restrict body roll during cornering.



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**KIT
HOW-TOs**

Vintage Speedsters and Auto Classics International Join Forces

PORSCHEs A PLenty

By Steve Temple & Eric Rickman

Some marriages are made in heaven; others are for convenience or money; and a few are all three. The latter is the case with the merger of Auto Classics International (ACI) and Vintage Speedsters. We've gone into detail about the Volkswagen-based ACI 550 and the Vintage 356 replicas in previous issues (September '93 and

March '94), so we won't cover the same ground again. Something we haven't shown before is ACI's Vintage Spec Series Racer (VSSR) 550, with a full comp treatment that imitates the original '55 Porsche 550A.

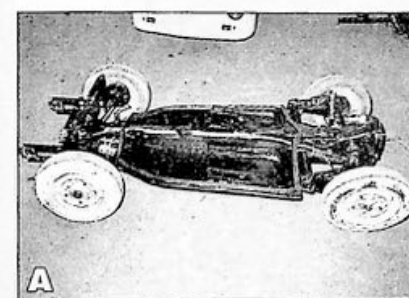
Available as a turn-key (\$24,875) or a rolling chassis kit (\$19,500), the silver VSSR 550 comes standard with an independent rear suspension, adjustable coil-over shocks and a sway bar. (The base model 550 features a swing-axle rearend with coil-overs, and kits start at \$6500, turn-

keys at \$16,500.) Outfitted with a 100hp air-cooled Type I VW engine and a 3.88:1 ratio rearend, the VSSR turned in a 0-60mph time of 6.46 seconds. Not quite Cobra territory, but the real fun is not stoplight starts but running on a road course. ACI claims timed runs at Firebird Raceway showed a top speed of 147 mph. The midmounted engine creates a wonderful balance, with a tossable feel that can make you feel invincible on a snaking section of asphalt. That's not always the case

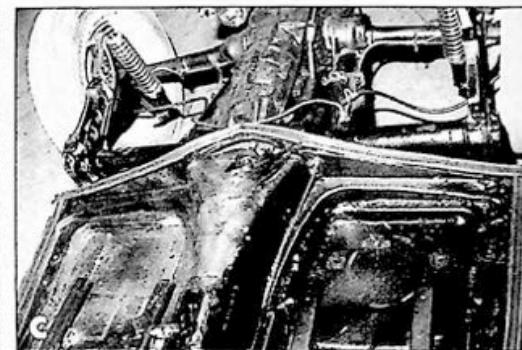
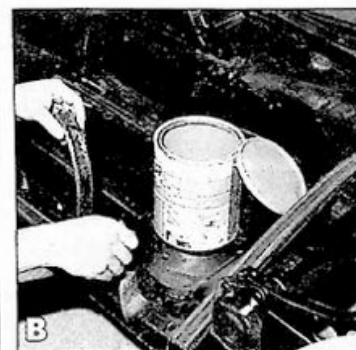
with your average Cobra replica.

Since this is our "kit how-to" issue, we thought you'd like to see how Vintage installs the body and windshield, prior to shipping the kit. We've occasionally seen other brands of Speedsters replicas with problems in these areas, but Vintage seems to have all the bugs worked out. So if you run into difficulties in these areas, take a close look at how it's done at Vintage. The company seems to know a thing or two about what makes a good marriage. **KC**

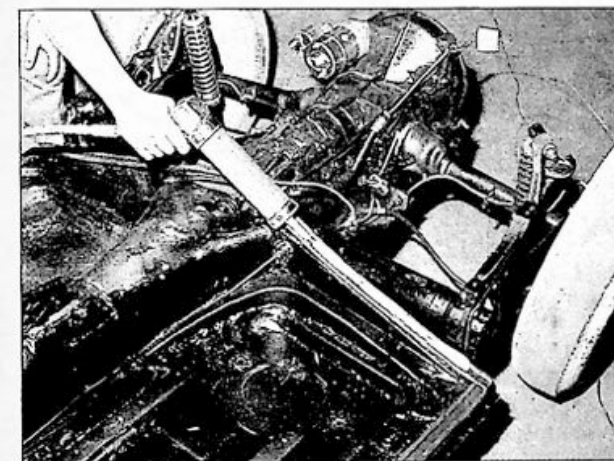
Body Mounting



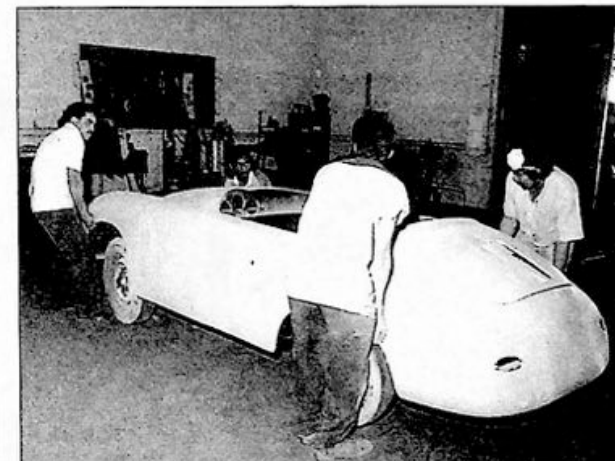
1 Prior to installing the Speedsters body, the VW pan (A) must be shortened 10 1/2 inches ("Out of the Pan," Specialty Car, May '93). Next, a wide strip of rubber molding, made of two small tubes joined by a wide web (B), is



glued in place with DAP Weldwood Contact Cement to seal the juncture between the chassis and body. Once installed around the perimeter (A&C), the rubber seal also reduces vibration and noise.

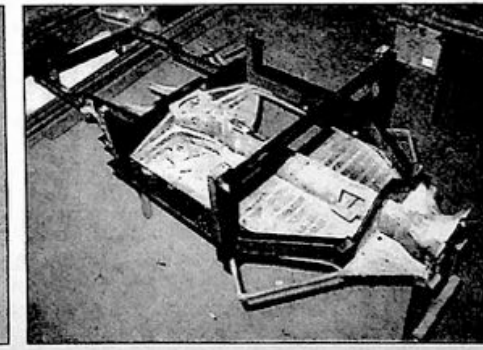
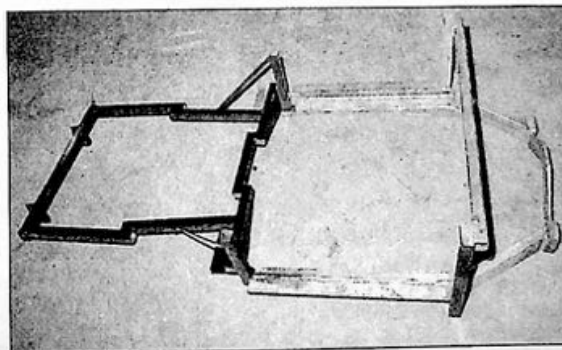


2 Before installing the body subframe, fill the upper channel of the rubber molding with DAP clear silicone caulking to ensure a watertight seal.



4 After the subframe is attached to the body, the crew at Vintage then sets the entire unit on the VW pan.

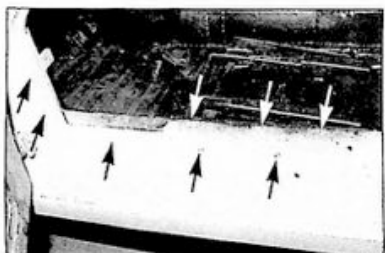
3 This tubular steel subframe supports the fiberglass body. The 2x4-inch vertical posts support the cowl crossmember and also serve as hinge mounts for the doors. The subframe also adds rigidity to the stock VW pan.



PORSCHE'S A PLenty



5 Body position is determined by the front crossmember on the pan, and lateral location is done by equalizing the measurements from the axle tips using a level held against the fender.

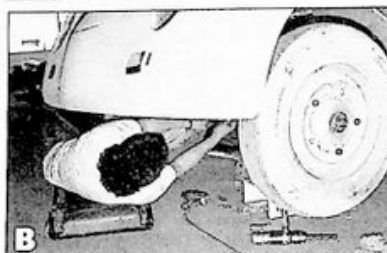
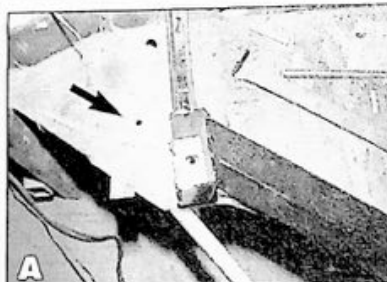


6 The fiberglass is attached to the supporting framework with Pop-rivets (arrows).

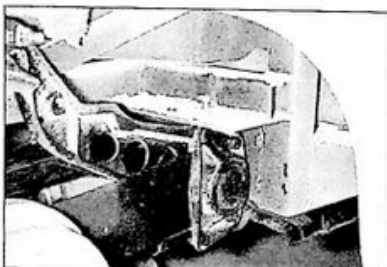


7 Bolt holes in the subframe's 1/4-inch plate flanges are predrilled. Some alignment with a drill bit may be required before installing the 3/8-inch bolts and washers. A liberal application of clear silicone is necessary prior to tightening the bolt.

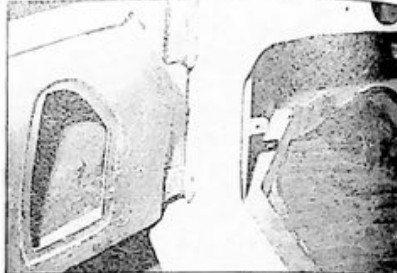
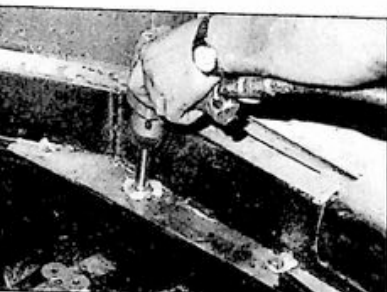
48 KIT CAR



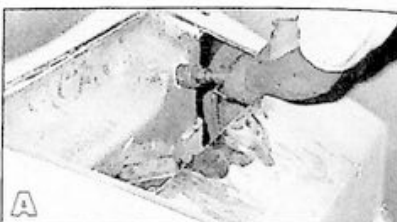
8 Looking down on the forward vertical tubing that joins the crossmember to the side rail, you can see the hole in the base (A). It's a two-man job to secure the nut and bolt in the corner box section from above and below (B&C).



9 At the rear, the subframe is bolted to the chassis just ahead of the trailing arms.

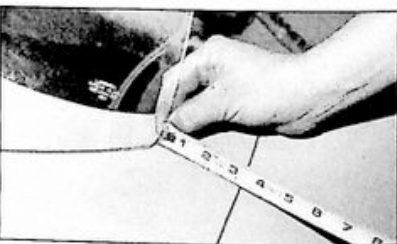


10 Door hinges are bolted through the fiberglass body into the 2x4-inch vertical members of the subframe for a solid mounting.

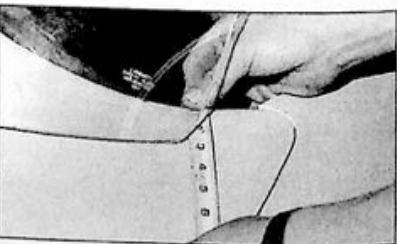


11 In the forward compartment, the opening made by the hole saw (A) is elongated (B) by sawing upward to accommodate the angle of the steering column.

Windshield Installation



12 Installing windshields is like buying real estate: The three most important things are location, location and location! While a helper supports the glass, position the outer edges 3 1/4 inches from the door seams.



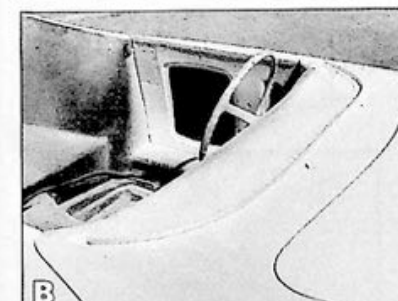
13 Both corners should be located 2 1/2 inches from the upper edge of the cowl.



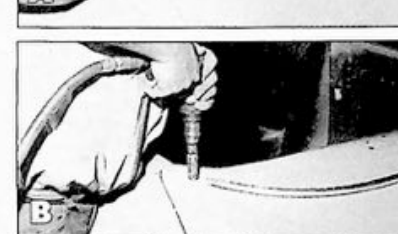
14 With the windshield held in place, the lower edge is traced on the cowl with a felt-tip marker.



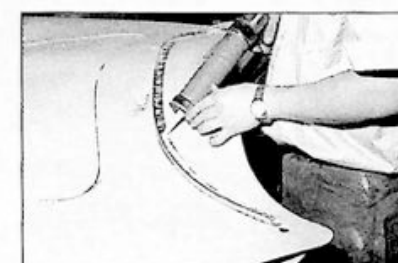
15 A predrilled aluminum molding/retaining strip is already slotted in the flange for ease of bending. The strip is located at the outer edge of the glass tracing and secured by drilling through the cowl (A) for a Pop-rivet (B).



16 The molding is carefully shaped (A) to follow the line traced on the cowl and secured by a large number of rivets, particularly in the curved portions at each end of the strip (B).



17 The mounting hole for the windshield frame is located in the center of the mold flange, 3/4 inch beyond the end of the strip (A). A 3/4-inch hole saw is used to drill the mounting hole (B). To ensure solid support, the body is 1/4 inch thick in this section.



18 A bead of DAP silicone caulk is applied smoothly along the length of the molding.



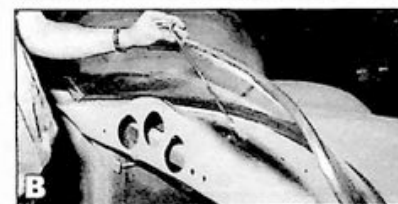
19 Heavy rubber molding is fitted over the lower edge of the windshield to seal the joint between the glass and the aluminum cowl strip.



20 After a thin rubber edge molding is fitted on the upper edge of the glass, the windshield frame with attached mounting brackets goes on.



21 The assembled windshield is then trial-fitted to the cowl (A). The mounting holes (B) must be opened up slightly along the lower front edge to accommodate the slant of the mounting brackets.



22 Before final installation, the windshield is tilted forward to permit drilling the mounting hole (A) for the center post (B) which also supports the rearview mirror.



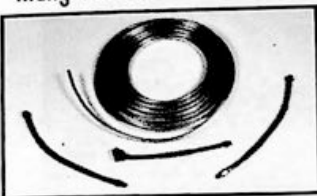
23 To bolt the windshield on, the mounting bracket post is threaded internally to accept a long bolt that secures the assembly with a tubular spacer and a series of large washers.

SOURCE

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12112 Centralia
Hawaiian Gardens, CA 90716
310/402-4334

Many Parts Shown Have Been Used on Street Rods & Various Kit Cars With Minor or no Modification Required!

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Brake hoses with clips.
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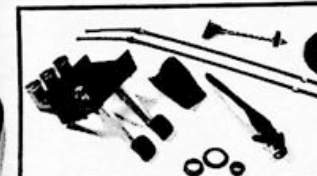
2 V.D.O. gauges "illuminated" Oil Pressure, Fuel, Speedo with trip meter, Clock, Tachometer, Voltage, Water Temp, Plus senders, high beam & turn lights - Complete Pkg. \$345.00 set.



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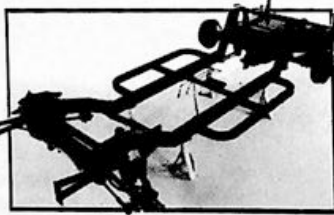


6 Shelby Design
Wheel
15x7" Front. 15x8 1/2"
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41/2" Ford bolt pattern.
Looks good on a
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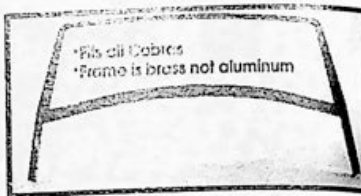
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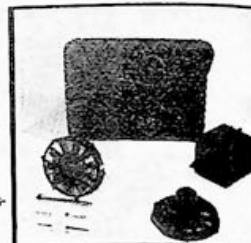
7 427 Bodies. Shell Valley Motors Prides
itself on its skill put into each body
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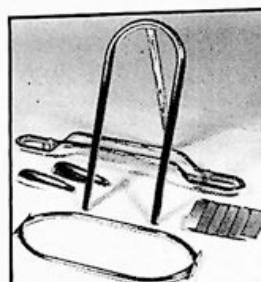
8 Glide Ride Stage 3 Chassis 3760.0 front &
rear suspension mounted!
*Tubular A Arms
*Triangulated 4 Bar Rear Suspension
*Coilover shocks Ft. & Rr.
*Proper ground clearance can easily be set.
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a step above the rest.



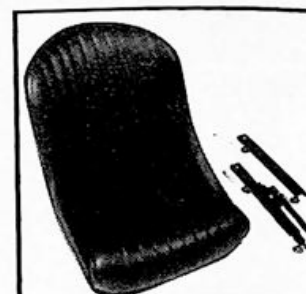
9 Brass chrome plated
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weather seal
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10 Radiator 4 Core Crossflow \$245.00
Brackets (not shown) \$50.00. 427 Nose
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\$40.00. Cooling Fans feature the highest
C.F.M. available. \$200.00 pair. Single 16"
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Other Products available:
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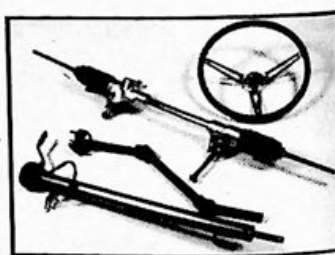
11 Roll Bar \$300.00.
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12 427 Seats feature a dense combi-
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13 427 Accessories
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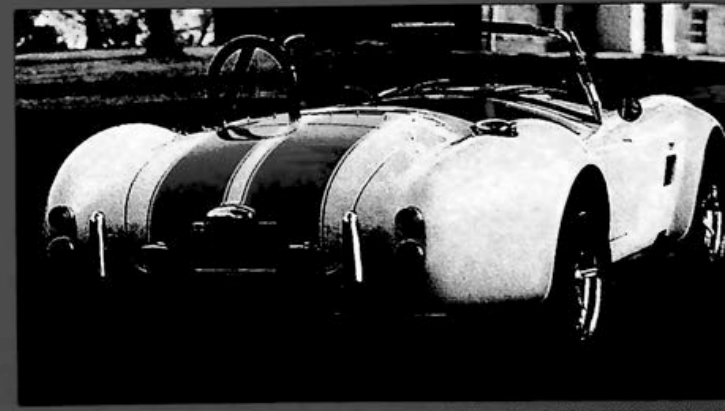
Heavy Artillery



Jasper Shows How
to Get a Big-Block
Bang out of a
Low-Buck
Small-Block

By Steve Temple

Even Carroll Shelby admits with
20/20 hindsight that a Ford
351 is a better engine for the
Cobra than a 427 big-block. It has
plenty of ponies but not as much
poundage as a 427 for better all-
around performance. Hard-core
Cobra enthusiasts may scoff at such
a concept. For them, a side-oiler
setup with mondo torque and horse-
power is the only way to go, no mat-



PHOTOGRAPHY: STEVE TEMPLE

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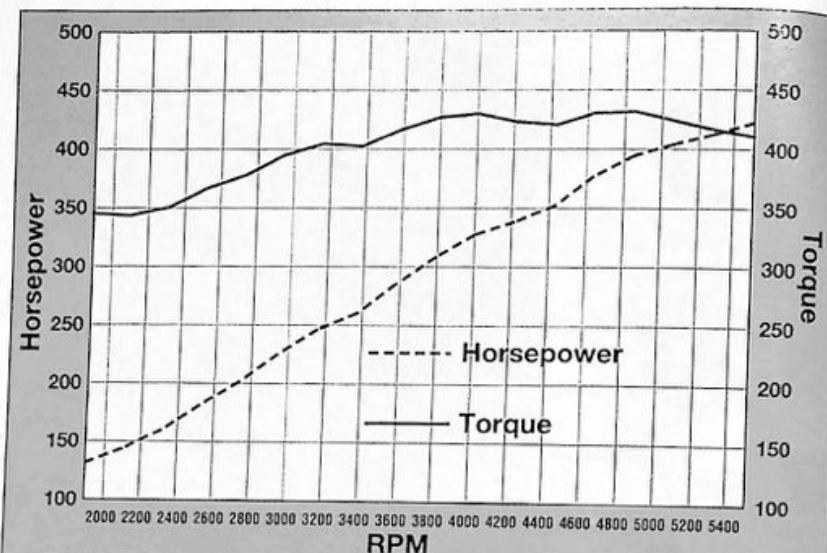
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Heavy Artillery

ter what Shelby himself may say. Fortunately, there's a way to have your cake and eat it too—and for a reasonable price to boot.

With a bit of massaging, a 351 Windsor puts out power comparable to a stock 427 but weighs nearly 180 pounds less. Moreover, Jasper's Performance Division sells a 440hp 351W for \$4000 less than a 427 (\$6000 versus \$10,000 for a dressed-out engine). Supply an engine core for a credit, and the price drops even more. The 351W is available in several levels of power, but 305 and 365 hp are the most popular (if your funds are really tight, the price for the 180hp bone stock model is as low



The dyno figures don't lie. Here's how much power and torque Jasper pulls out of a built 351W Ford.

as \$1525 with core exchange). On the Performance Division's engines, even though the block, crank and rods are "remanufactured" (used components that have been reconditioned), most of the other components are new, including hardened stellite valve seats for unleaded pump gas.

Cobra power preferences aside, Jasper Engines & Transmissions offers just about any previously

owned engine and driveline part you can imagine, from Detroit diesels to Fiero V6s to Ford 9-inch rearends, all remanufactured and guaranteed for as much as 12 months. It's a kit builder's dream come true, especially if you're on a tight budget and don't want to piddle away weekends scrounging through muddy junkyards in search of parts of dubious durability. (Of course, some folks

really enjoy that sort of thing, so there are a couple of features elsewhere in this issue on rebuilding and installing used engines.)

Jasper Engines & Transmissions was founded in 1942 by Alvin Ruxer, a Ford dealer who also had a tiny 12x20-foot machine shop to offset war-time shortages of autos. From that small beginning, the company has flourished into a 7½-acre facility



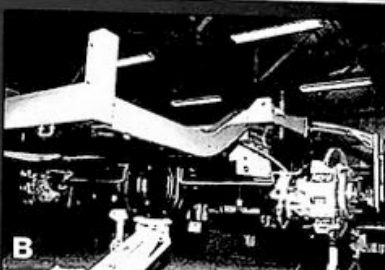
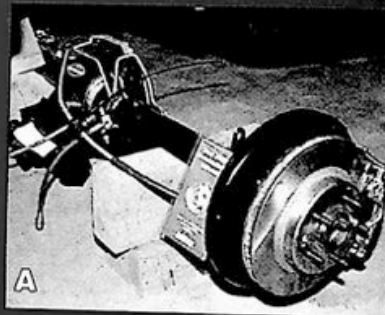
The company has come a long way in size and scope since its founding in 1942. The current facility houses 7½ acres under one roof.



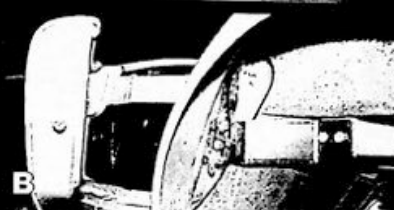
A huge inventory of all engine types and sizes is carefully stacked and cataloged.

THE COBRA THAT JASPER BUILT

Classic Roadster's Cobra replica features a number of modifications for cost savings and practicality. For the sake of the latter, the door openings are enlarged and the seat mounts recessed for better cockpit ergonomics. As for cost savings, the suspension pieces are standard Blue Oval items, from the Mustang II fronts to the 8.8-inch live-axle rearend. Current pricing for the complete kit is \$13,850 base, with frame and body packages available as well. Jasper plans to sell this particular vehicle before beginning another project, so make an offer.



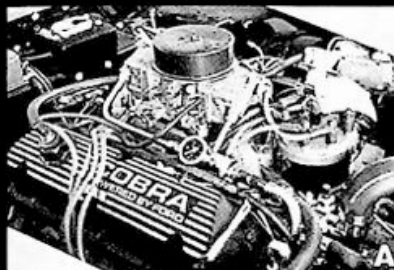
A Jasper remanufactured 8.8-inch rearend with Ford SVO 10½-inch, five-lug disc brakes (A) bolts right in Classic's frame (B).



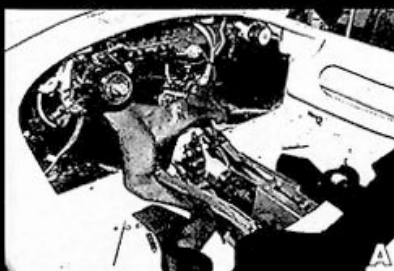
After fitting on the body (A), the door latch mechanism was bolted to the frame (B). Although a color gelcoat comes standard, Jasper preferred to sand and prime the body so it could be painted and striped.



A layer of red coat was applied first. After the stripes were taped off (A), the body was shot with a white coat (B), followed by five applications of polyurethane clearcoat.



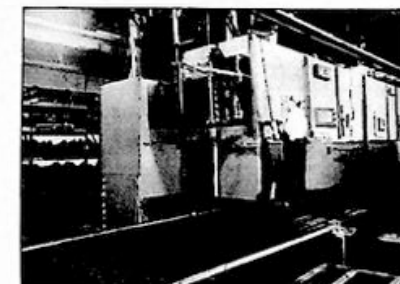
With Jasper's 351W installed (A), the sidepipes were fitted (B).



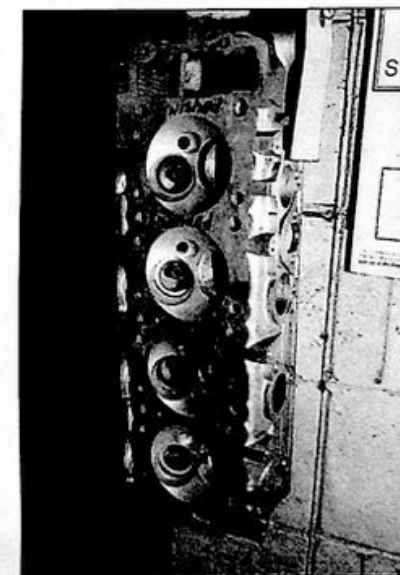
Final assembly included hooking up the wiring and steering column (A) and then the instrument panel (B).



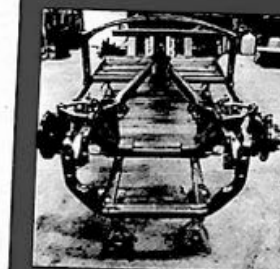
The Jasper crew that donated all its time and hard work was very proud of the results, and for good reason.



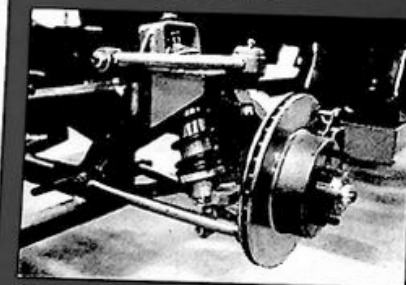
Used engine cores are first hot-tanked in a 700 degree Fahrenheit Kolene saltwater bath which burns away any grease and grime. A rinse and acid bath follow to derust the block, then a rust-inhibitor is applied.



Cleaned heads are carefully inspected for damage and repaired when necessary.



The box-tube frame accepts late-model suspension components.



At the front, Jasper installed P&J's tubular A-arms with a Mustang II geometry and Pro-Shocks coil-overs.



A Lokar LTD emergency brake assembly bolted right on the driveline tunnel.

Heavy Artillery

that produces 40,000 remanufactured engines per year and thousands of other driveline components. In a recent tour of the facility in southern Indiana, we came away amazed at the hive of activity, with hundreds of white-shirted men and women busily reconditioning parts as fast as they could bring them in, all working a 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. shift, five days a week. (The German immigrants who settled in this region never

heard of the 40-hour work week.)

Building a kit car was a natural fit for the Jasper employees who donated their time and effort to make this project a reality. The Classic Roadsters Cobra replica they built is equipped with the robust 440hp 351W mill already mentioned, running through Jasper's Richmond five-speed (\$1609) and Ford's 8.8-inch rearend. Starting at the top, performance goodies on the mill include a 750cfm Holley, an Edelbrock Performer manifold, Trick Flow Specialties cylinder heads, Jasper flat-top pistons and a Wolverine WG-1042 camshaft.

And how quick is the strike on this

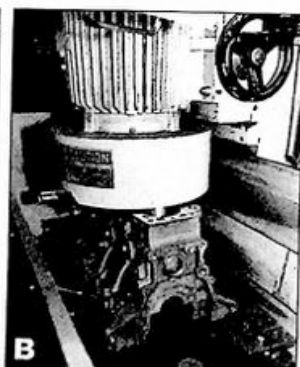
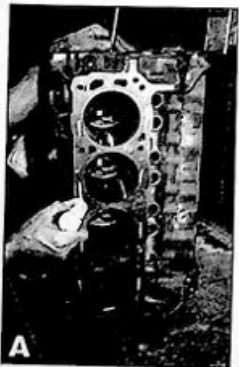
Cobra? Jasper's crew did a great job of assembling the kit. The completed vehicle operates as smoothly as the bolt action on an M-16 rifle and feels as solid as a Sherman tank, with all the firepower you'd hope for in a Cobra. We shot off several rounds and came away convinced of the truth of Shelby's dictum on the virtues of the 351W. With this load of ammo under the engine hatch, set your sights on a 0-60mph recoil in the 4-second range. And the balanced handling was pure pleasure, since you don't have to lug around a big lump of iron up front. Some big-block Cobra combatants may already be waving a white flag. **KC**



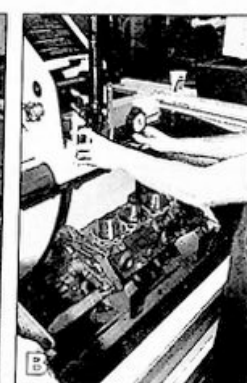
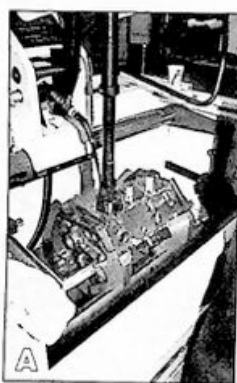
Magnafluxing reveals any hidden cracks.



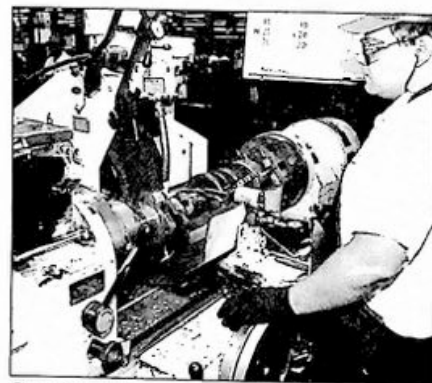
Repaired cylinder heads are honed and deburred, and refitted with hardened valve seats.



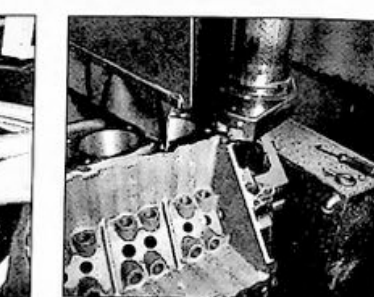
Blocks are checked and marked (A), then milled (B).



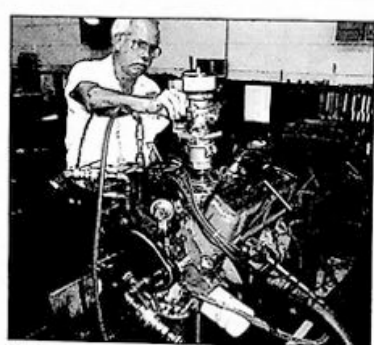
Cylinders must be bored (A), then measured (B) for correct piston tolerances.



Crankshafts are ground, demagnetized and balanced.



Jasper requires that its blocks be square-decked to a precision tolerance of .0001 inch. (Variance on factory-original blocks may be as much as .0012 inch.)



After reassembly, the engine is started up and the valvetrain inspected through transparent valve covers.

SOURCES

Classic Roadsters
Dept. KC01
1617 Main Ave.
Fargo, ND 58103
800/373-9000

Jasper Engines & Transmissions
Dept. KC01
815 Wernsing Rd.
P.O. Box 650
Jasper, IN 47547
800/827-7455



Completed engines are sealed in plastic in preparation for shipping.

WARNING:

DO NOT BUY OR BUILD ANY KIT CAR UNTIL YOU READ THIS PAGE!

Don't waste \$5 to \$10 for each manufacturer's information packet. Read the following first. It could save you thousands of dollars.

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Corey Rudl, the owner of two kit car companies since the age of 17, has seen too many good people take 2 years instead of 2 months and budget \$10,000 but spend \$30,000 to complete their kit car. Not because they're stupid, but because they do not have the experience, inside tips and secrets, and costly knowledge it takes to build a kit car with the least expense. Corey became so frustrated with this situation that he decided to show you how easy it is to avoid all the pitfalls and aggravation, but best of all, he shares all his kit car secrets with you in his new book called *Secrets of Buying & Building Your Specialty Car on a Small Budget*. It contains facts you will need if you are building a kit car.

Some of the things you will learn on Building:

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- How and where to find the right parts and the proper donor car—crucial information
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Purchasing the right kit and dealing with the right manufacturer will save you thousands of dollars, and we'll show you how.

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- How to get the absolutely lowest price
- How to buy a turnkey or kit on your terms
- What to look for when buying
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- How to choose the perfect kit for you!
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- The easiest/cheapest way to register kit cars
- When to doubt a manufacturer's claims

Under certain circumstances you may:

- Get your car assembled *absolutely free*
- Get the government to pay for your kit or turnkey car

You will learn the above and much more with super-simple, easy-to-understand techniques.

It doesn't matter if you are looking for a kit or turnkey car, presently assembling one, or have completed your kit; the information in his book will save you thousands of dollars! Some of his techniques, tips and secrets are revolutionary and worth a small fortune! Many of them apply to any car, not just your kit car.

This book has been widely praised by the *Specialty Constructed Vehicle Association*, *The Complete Guide to Specialty Cars*, *Kit Car Magazine* and *Kit Car Illustrated*.

Here's Proof!

"As my project forged ahead, my dream machine was turning into a nightmare. It was looking like my car was going to cost me \$35,000 instead of the \$18,000 I budgeted. Then I met Corey; his tips and secrets got me out of my predicaments and I ended up building my car for less than \$15,000." Wesley White, Merickville, Ontario

"We experienced car buffs will even gain some valuable tips. There are not too many books out there that deal with our specialty car hobby, so when a good one comes along, we need to grab it!" Oklahoma Kit Car Club

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Boneyard Rebuild

**KIT
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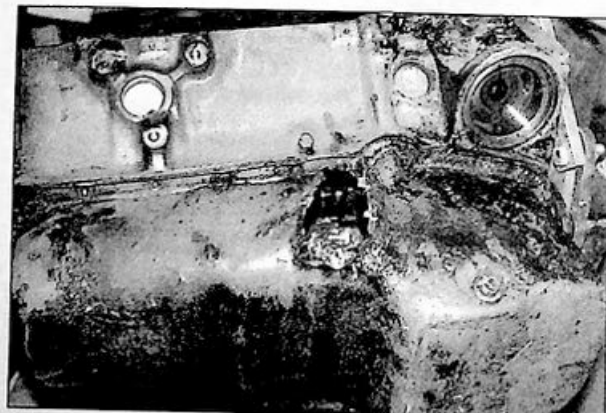


Tips for Redoing an Engine on the Cheap in Your Own Backyard

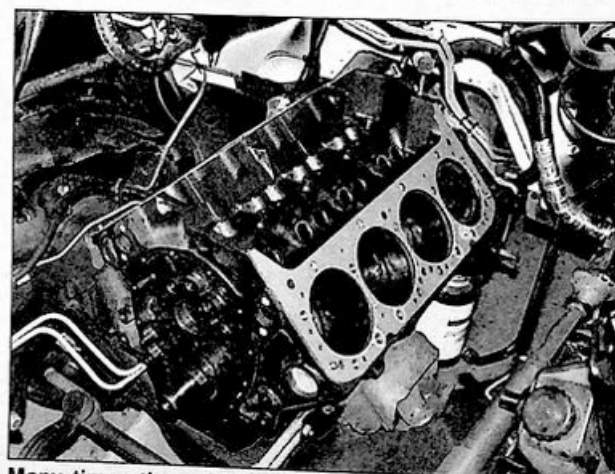
By Brent Ross

In last issue's Engine Guide column, we discussed tips on buying a used engine—hopefully one that could be dropped right into your kit project without much fuss. That approach was obviously for the budget-minded builder, and the shallow-wallet concept runs deep throughout this article as well. Here we look at what it might take to freshen up a high-mileage engine at home before installing it in your kit.

Keep in mind that the best way to rebuild an engine is to pull the beast and have it thoroughly inspected, machined and stocked with all-new parts. However, you'll see little of that here. We are talking a cheapo rebuild. This kind of nonglamorous rebuild is done everyday but is seldom talked about. If this type of behind-closed-doors rebuild is done before an engine is too far gone, the results can be thousands of miles of trouble-free motoring.



The trick to tightening up an engine is knowing when it makes sense, when it requires a more thorough rebuild or when the engine is junk. A rod through the pan is an all-too-obvious indication that you have a new boat anchor.

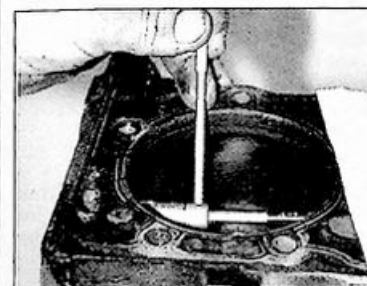


Many times the quick-hit rebuild we'll show here can be done with the block still in the vehicle.

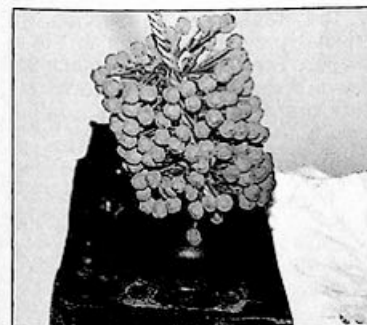
PHOTOGRAPHY: BRENT ROSS

Rings Twice

The cylinders, pistons and piston rings hold back compressed gases during the compression stroke and hot, rapidly expanding gases during the power stroke. Also, the piston rings must prevent lubricating oil in the bottom-end from entering the combustion chamber. The pistons transfer their downward thrust to the connecting rod and crankshaft. In other words, these parts have tough jobs, and all of them must be in top shape for the engine to run smoothly and deliver good power and reliability. As the miles pile on, the cylinders and rings begin to wear, which allows combustion pressure to leak past the rings and into the crankcase. This condition doesn't always require a complete rebuild to remedy. Often fresh piston rings on a deglazed bore will do the trick.



Frequently a simple re-ring will do wonders, but not all engines are good candidates for this budget fix. The bores must be measured for out-of-round, taper and piston-to-cylinder-wall clearance. If these fall within manufacturer's specs, and providing the cylinder walls or pistons are not cracked or scored, just grab the rings. Otherwise, the cylinders will require overboring and new pistons.



In order for the new rings to break in and seal properly, the cylinders must be deglazed using a deglaze hone, an electric drill motor and a light industrial oil. Although this type of hone removes very little metal, improper or excessive honing can ruin a good cylinder.

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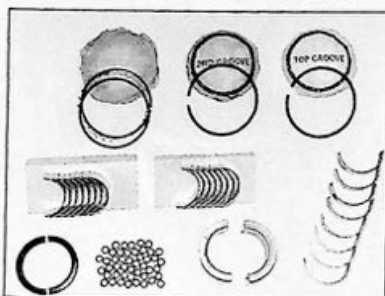
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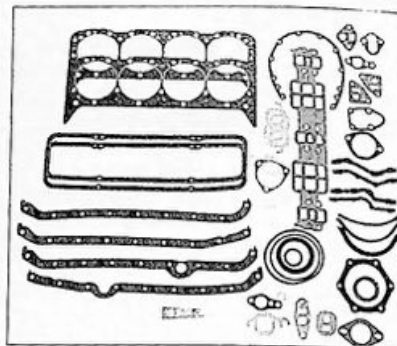
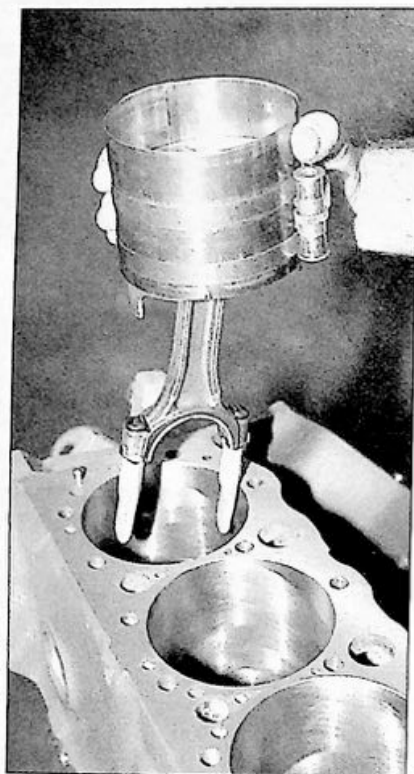
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Boneyard Rebuild



Installing just a few key items (rings, main and rod bearings, and valve stem seals) can bring new life to a tired engine. Cast piston rings are inexpensive and appropriate for this type of rebuild. Pistons generally wear little and should be fine unless a foreign substance has damaged them. If the piston-to-cylinder-wall clearance is too great, the engine will run hot because the piston will be unable to transfer combustion heat to the cylinder walls for the coolant to carry it off. The engine will also have a clattering sound.



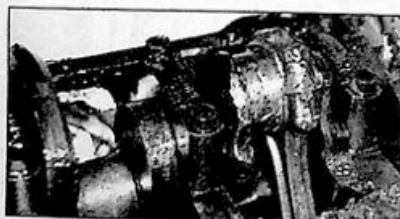
Never use gaskets twice. Even for the budget rebuild you'll need a complete engine gasket set. Don't scrimp on cost. Buy top-quality products such as those from Fel-Pro.

Here new rings on a cleaned-up piston are installed into a properly prepared block. The rod bolts are covered to prevent their scratching the cylinders and crank journals. A ring compressor is used to prevent damage to the rings during installation. Note the fresh cross-hatch pattern on the cylinder walls from honing. This is the look you want. Although this engine has been deck-surfaced, even the home mechanic should thoroughly prepare the head-gasket surface.

Bearing Down

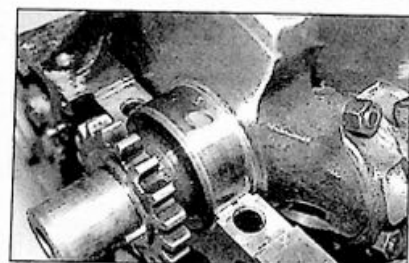
The crankshaft has the toughest job in the engine. It is also the most highly stressed. It must convert the jumping-about motion of the pistons into rotational energy to move the car. All the torque produced by the engine must pass directly through the crankshaft. The crank also must put up with the pistons taking turns at trying to drive the crankshaft out the bottom of the engine. The crank and its bearing are also an integral part of the vehicle's oiling system. A flaw here can cause the entire engine to lose oil pressure.

Although it is such a critical part, if the crank is in decent shape it does not have to be reground or professionally polished for a successful budget rebuild. Often a good cleanup and new bearings is all that it wants.



This is what you don't want to see when you pull the pan. This engine lost oil pressure, causing a rod bearing to overheat and the rod to break. It may be possible to save this crank, but it would require welding and regrounding. The block is also damaged.

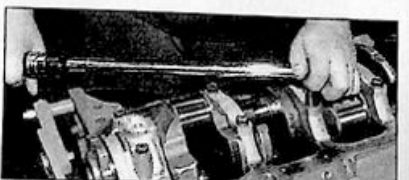
58 KIT CAR



This is what you hope to see. The crank journals are in good shape. Installing fresh bearings will bring the clearance and oil pressure back into spec.

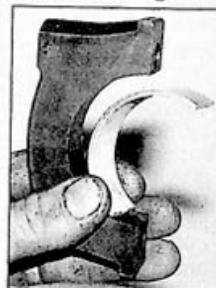


Though it is best to check main- and rod-bearing clearances using a micrometer, the Plasti-Gage method is perfectly acceptable. Plasti-Gage is a soft material that is placed between the journal and the bearing during test assembly. A paper gauge is used to measure its expansion and therefore its bearing clearance.



A torque wrench is required to tighten main and rod bolts to the proper spec. If it's in the budget, use new rod bolts. ARP bolts make an excellent upgrade.

Because the bearing material is much softer than the crank, the bearings wear more rapidly. This allows us to replace the bearings and achieve good running clearances. Bearings are marked on their undersides, so one can quickly determine if a bearing is undersized or standard. Check every bearing. Someone may have reground just one journal at some point in the crank's history. The crank must be cleaned. Pay particularly close attention to the oil passages. The caps and the block also deserve inspection and deburring to ensure that the caps sit flush against the block.

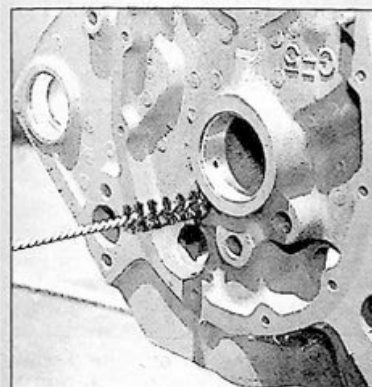


Harmonic balancers often become grooved where they ride against the front seal. This causes an oil leak. Rather than buy a new balancer, slide this \$5 sleeve over it.

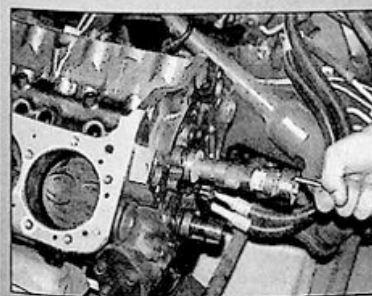
Camshaft Clues

The camshaft is the brain of the engine. It controls the engine's breathing by determining when the valves open and close. The camshaft is under a moderate load, so if the engine was oiling properly, wear should be minimal. However, light wear to the cam lobes will alter valve events and total lift, causing power to drop. If only a couple lobes are worn, it will be difficult to achieve a smooth idle because the worn cylinders fill differently.

Camshafts are inexpensive, so you may want to consider replacing a high-mileage bumpstick. Also, purchasing a new cam gives you the opportunity to move the powerband where it might better suit your needs. However, keep in mind that engines are a combination of parts working together, and installing a cam with a radically different profile into an otherwise stock engine may result in disappointing performance.



This 350 Chevy block was prepped for a new camshaft. All oil passages were cleaned and then blown clear using compressed air. New cam bearings are a must. Typically the front bearing is the largest, with progressively smaller bearings toward the rear.



New camshafts such as this Edelbrock Performer series cam come with an assembly lube which should be liberally applied to both the lobes and the journals.

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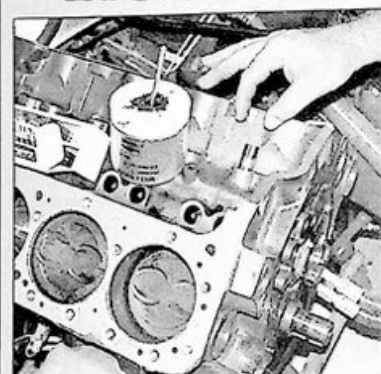
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Boneyard Rebuild

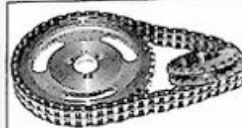


A new lifter and pushrod set make nice additions to a low-dollar rebuild. Lightly hone the lifter bores before installing the new lifters.



Timing sets are high-wear items that should be replaced. A worn timing set causes erratic cam timing and poor ignition timing if the distributor is driven off the camshaft. It is also not unheard of for a timing chain, belt or gear to break, destroying the engine. Many Chevy small-blocks often use a plastic cam gear which wears quickly. These gears should be replaced.

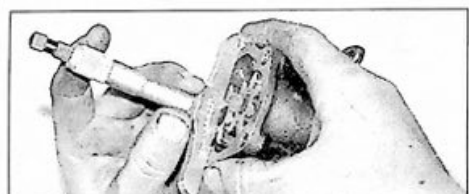
Both Chevy and Ford V8s can benefit from a high-quality timing set. Shown is an Edelbrock double-row timing set for the small-block Ford. Next to an expensive gear-drive system, the double-row timing chain is the best.



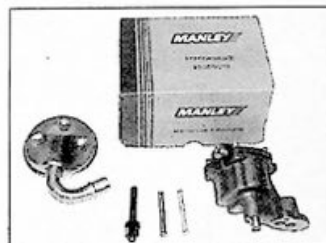
Pump It Up

If the camshaft is the engine's brain, then the oil pump is its heart. Without a heart, the engine won't run. Luckily the oil pump is a very

under-stressed part, and it benefits from running in a constant oil bath. They rarely fail. Nonetheless, the oil deserves inspection.



If an engine has sat for a long time or was exposed to the elements, the oil pump will probably need replacing. The pump of a high-mileage engine should be taken apart and visually inspected. Check gear endplay. If there's excessive clearance, lightly sand the pump body to reduce the clearance. If the end-play is tight, sand the tops of the gears. It is also smart to tack-weld the oil tube to the pump body. The pickup should be positioned about a 1/2 inch from the bottom of the pan.



Replacing an old pump with a new stock unit is cheap insurance at about \$25 a pump. However, for those wanting to step up the oiling potential of their engine, Manley, among others, offers pumps with adjustable bypass pressure and anticavitation features.

Head Start

It's been said that the heads hold the keys to unlocking hidden power, but even the best heads in the world are ineffective once worn. If an engine overheats, the heads can become warped and will no longer seal the combustion chambers properly. If the valve guides are loose or worn, the valves wiggle about the guides like a Christmas tree in a cheap stand. Basic valve jobs are inexpensive if you remove the heads yourself, so in some cases it's probably best to send out the heads. However, the heads of a nonabused engine can often be returned to tip-top shape with a few easy tweaks you can do at home.



For best results, send the heads out for a thorough rebuild. Have them Magnaflexed, the valve seats recut, the heads surfaced, the guides checked or replaced, the valves checked for runout and new springs and seals installed.

All Cracked Up

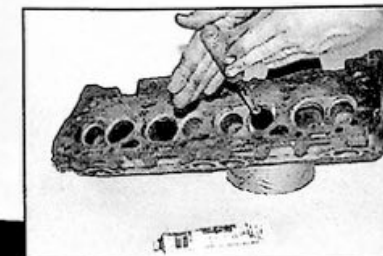
Met-L-Chek has a unique portable product that is ideally suited to the at-home mechanic. We recently tried it and discovered a tiny crack between the valves of a Ford 289 head. This head had previously been Magnaflexed, so we knew where the cracks were and were not. We feel this method made for an accurate way to test the Met-L-Chek kit.

The visible penetrant is a four-part deal. First, we used the R-501 cleaner to prepare the testing surface. Next, the red-colored VP-30 penetrant was sprayed onto the surface to penetrate flaws and cracks. Then we used the E-59 remover to remove excess penetrant from the surface of the head. Last, the D-70 developer was applied to produce a white coating on the surface. The red penetrant still deep in the crack showed through the white developer. We found the Met-L-Chek system an excellent method of discovering nasty as well as tiny surface cracks. **KC**



Priced at only \$28 (plus shipping), the Met-L-Chek is a low-buck, easy way to examine your engine for hairline cracks.

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If there was not a blown head gasket when you took the engine apart, and if you've checked each valve guide for proper valve stem clearance and the seats and valves for signs of damage, simply lapping the old valves and seats will restore the sealing ability of the valves.

A major cause of high oil consumption in many engines is worn valve stem seals. Lapping the valves and installing new valve stem seals can make many heads give near-new performance.

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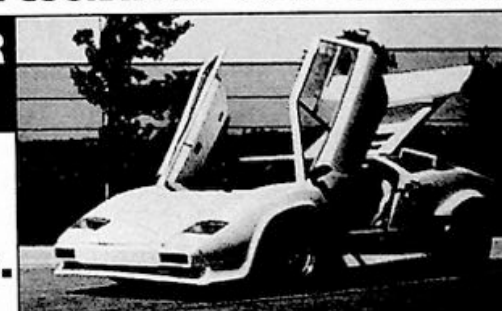
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Man of Steel

How a Bodywork Pro Turned a Mild-Mannered Porsche 914 Into a Supercar

By Steve Temple

Ugly and underpowered—those are two typical words applied to the Porsche 914. Despite such drawbacks, this midengine, low-profile sports car offers some of the best driving fun per dollar of any car around, accounting for its enormous popularity. Chris Thompson knew all that when he was offered a tired '74 914 (without engine and trans) just for the cost of towing it away. And being a professional bodyman, he also knew how to fix the ugly parts. Moreover, Rod Simpson's V8 adapter package allowed Chris to stuff a 327hp small-block Chevy into the cramped compartment for faster-than-a-speeding-bullet performance.

What you see here is not the latest fiberglass rebody—although Chris is thinking about offering a kit and turn-key cars—but a custom one-off fabricated entirely out of metal. At first sight, it's hard to believe this sleek shape was done without applying even a thimble of resin. But take a look at the project photos and you can see all the shiny sheetmetal for yourself. This body conversion is not only a testament to Chris' sense of style, but also to his resourcefulness and craftsmanship. It took him more than a year of scrounging and shaping bent-but-usable parts headed for the shredder. The result is a car that the 914 *should* have been.

The tools Chris used were pretty much standard fare: a Williams manual shrinker and stretcher, a MIG welder, hand- and air-powered files, and a welding bottle for rolling the sheetmetal. He started out by reinforcing the frame with tubular steel in the cockpit and rear trunk, and then chopped the top and raked the windshield. He enlarged the wheel openings and widened

PHOTOGRAPHY: STEVE TEMPLE

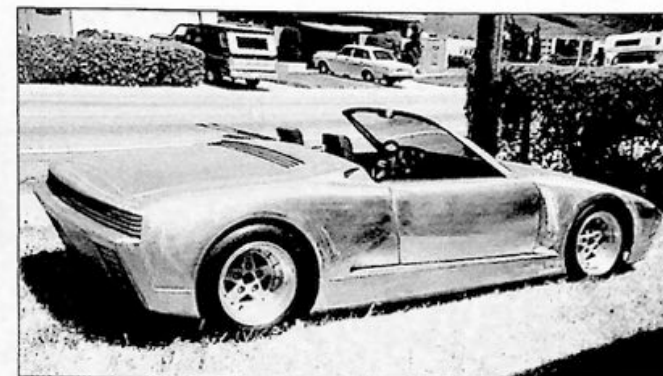


the fenders for bigger Offy wheels (15x8 front, 15x10 rear). He welded new door skins on the old ones and rolled and bent them to flow into the window sills and brake vents. Exhaust tubing cut into thirds formed the frame for the new nose, with sheetmetal welded on to form the flat sections. The grilles were made from strips of sheetmetal with 120-degree bends shaped with a shrinker. The engine airbox was formed by bending sheetmetal over a block of wood. For final finishing, the panels were picked and filed by hand, with only a smidgen of body filler to smooth out the rear bumpers. Spies Hecker Classic Red acrylic urethane sprayed by Mad Max Mora added the finishing touches.

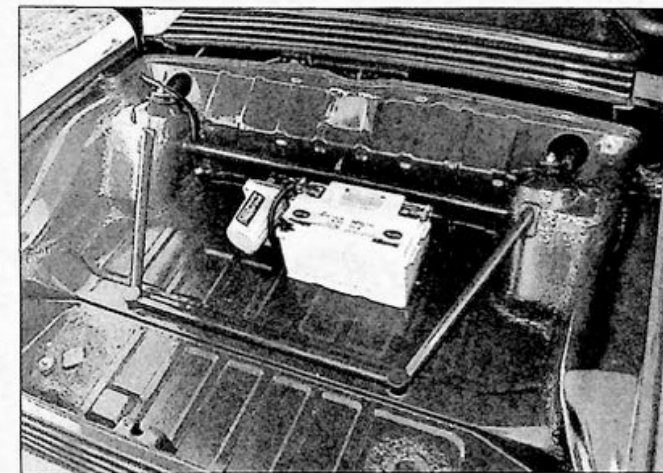
And you know what's the biggest surprise? Not counting the engine mods and new BFGoodrich T/A rubber, Chris spent only \$4500 out of pocket on the whole project. That's what really makes this project a supercar. **KC**



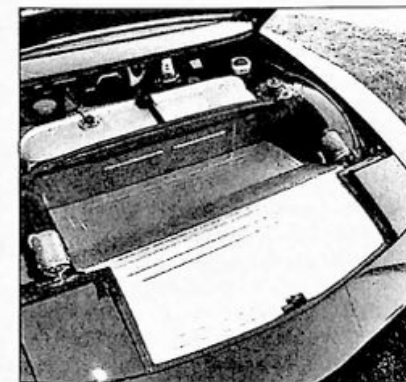
Check out the rolled edge of the nose fabricated from exhaust tubing cut into thirds.



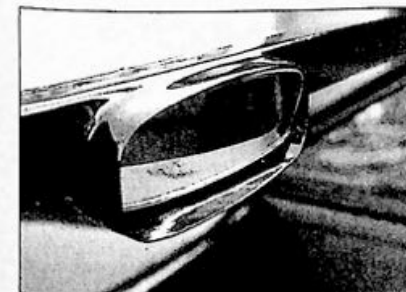
If you thought the new panels were plastic, look again—they're all sheetmetal.



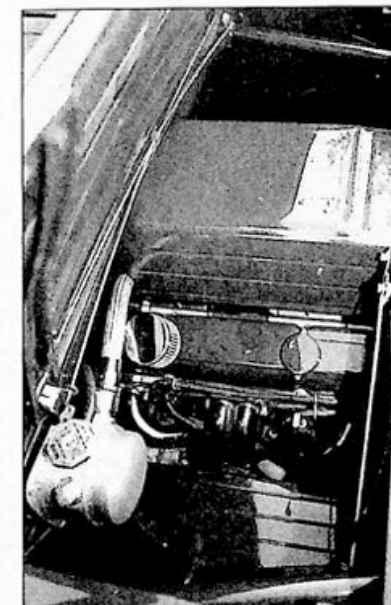
Before chopping the top, Chris added reinforcements in the cockpit and rear trunk.



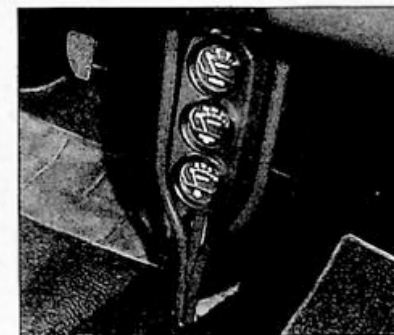
Custom paneling covers the radiator installed in the nose.



Detailing extended right down to a custom mount on the windshield frame for the rear-view mirror.



Block-hugger headers were required to fit the Chevy V8 into the engine bay.

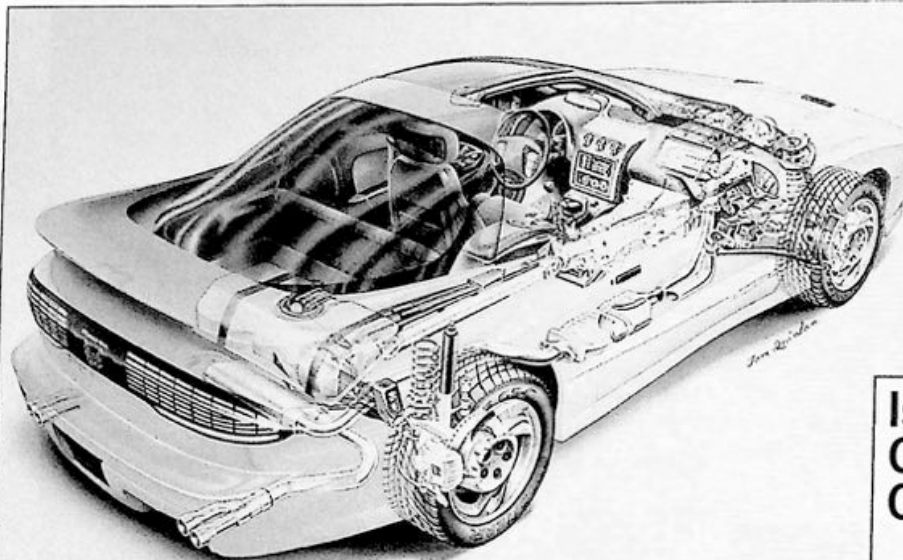


Custom-bent steel tubing forms the trick instrument pod.

SOURCES

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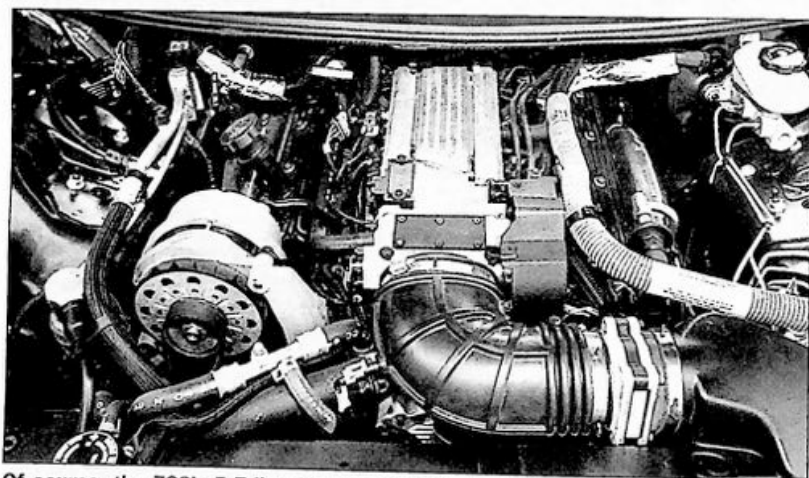
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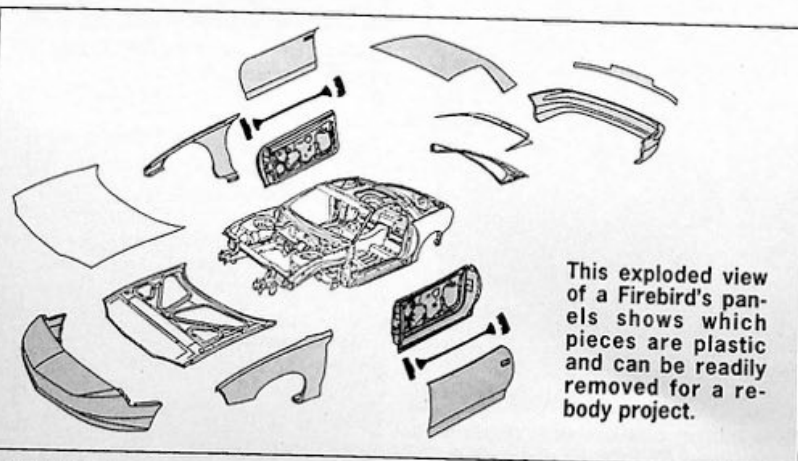
The Firebird features the same type of plastic-panel construction as the Camaro. The roof, doors, hatch and spoiler assembly are made of sheet-molded compound (SMC), essentially chopped glass in a polyester resin. The front fenders and fascia are formed by a reaction injection-molded (RIM) process of polyurethane reinforced with mica. The only sections that can't be simply unbolted are the rear quarter-panels, which are part of the unitized steel body structure.

Is This the Donor Car for the 21st Century?

Camaro/Firebird Conversions



Of course, the Z28's 5.7-liter V8, which kicks out 275 horses, is a primo engine for an exotic rebody that performs as good as it looks.



This exploded view of a Firebird's panels shows which pieces are plastic and can be readily removed for a rebody project.

While most car enthusiasts look at a new model for its own merits, we prefer to imagine what it could become. The Fiero, with its easily removable plastic panels, is a case in point. A dizzying array of kit projects use the car as a starting point, but it's getting long in the tooth and lacks one key ingredient: a V8. Sure, you can wring out more performance from the V6 or swap it for a small-block, but wouldn't it be simpler to find a donor car that has all the performance goodies right from the get-go, and modify that?

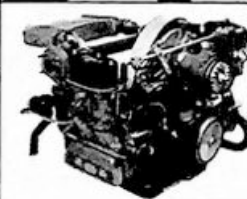
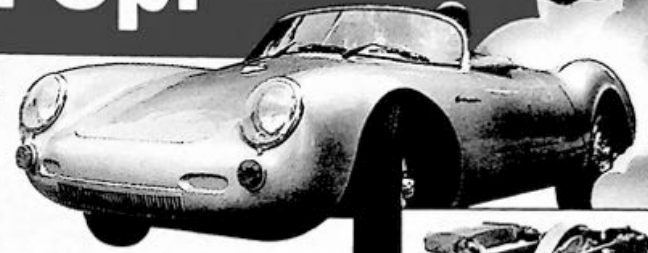
That's why we're drawn to the new Camaro and its sister model, the Firebird. Not only does it have the right engine between the fenders with 350 ci of fuel-injected fun, but a surprising number of the panels are—you guessed it—made of plastic, similar to those on the Fiero. We can just see the reboddy crowd rubbing their hands together in anticipation.

Given the appealing platform of the Camaro/Firebird, it's not surprising we're already seeing some moderate alterations in the panels and performance. We've collected several packages to show you what's already possible and also included some visuals of the car's construction to stimulate your imagination for future restyling projects. So get busy. We want to see just how far you can take it.

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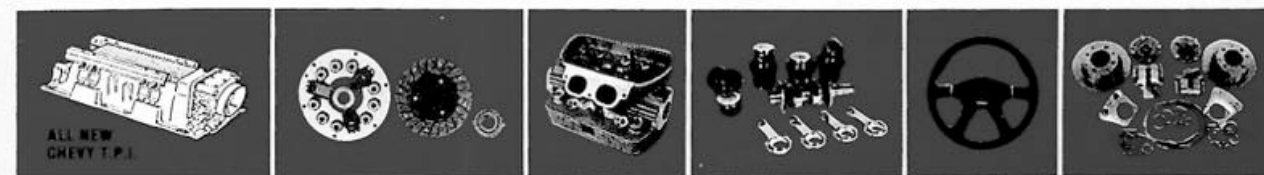


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Camaro/Firebird Conversions

CALLAWAY CARS

Remember when anything Reeves Callaway built could cost you a couple of vital organs? Well, now he and his crew of goblins have stirred up another magic brew, the 400hp SuperNatural Camaro C-8, but not necessarily at a supernatural price. That's because you can order each and every little piece separately and install it yourself, creating your level of conversion. Doing it this way offers you looks or performance or both at your personal financial rate.

The CamAerobody Package (PN C8201) is a simple body conversion that will give your Camaro a snappy retro/modern look, blending a little Ferrari, a little Corvette and a lot of Camaro. Unlike other body conversions which merely add cladding, the Callaway kit has a dramatically different concept car look. The package comes in six pieces, which includes nose and tail sections, headlight covers and a grille insert and sells for \$4500. The glasswork is Callaway's typical level of high quality and requires a minimum of prepping for paint.

At the heart of the Callaway SuperNatural Camaro C-8 is an emissions-legal 400hp 383ci stroker engine (available separately for \$9965 as an exchange), enhanced by a freer-breathing molded-composite air intake system, a Tri-Y exhaust system and a low-restriction muffler. With this package, the C-8 rockets from zero to 60 mph in 4.8 seconds, does the quarter-mile in 12.87 at 111 mph, has a top speed of 173 mph and still gets 23 mph highway, 15 mph city. Callaway Cars, Dept. KC01, 3 High St., Old Lyme, CT 06371, 800/231-1121. —David Fetherston

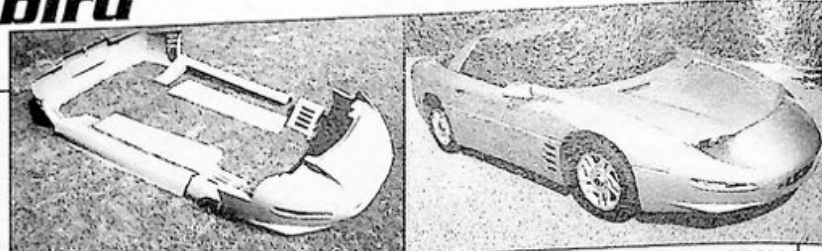
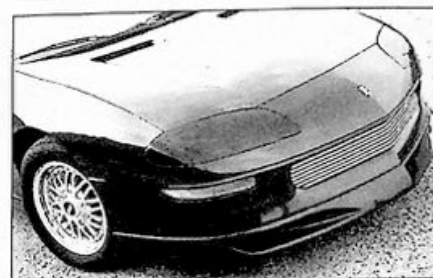
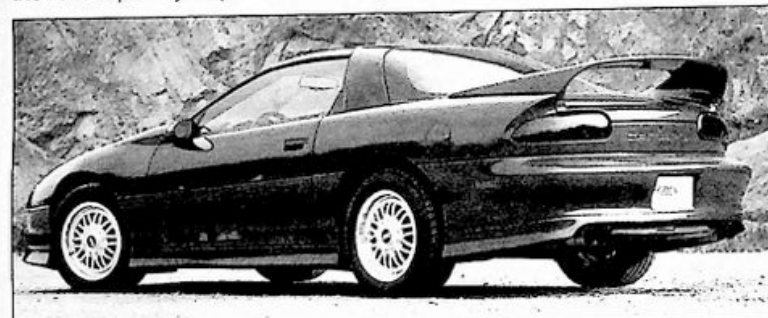


PHOTO: DAVID FETHERSTON

WINGS WEST

This five-piece styling package will turn your ponycar into a California Camaro. The airdam, side skirts and rear ground effects come as a set, but the rear super-style spoiler and billet grille are available separately. The



pieces are designed for easy bolt-on installation, and the spoiler uses original mounting points and retains the original brake light. For more information, contact Wings West, Dept. KC01, 925 W. 18th St., Ste. A, Costa Mesa, CA 92627, 714/722-9995.

PAXTON PRODUCTS

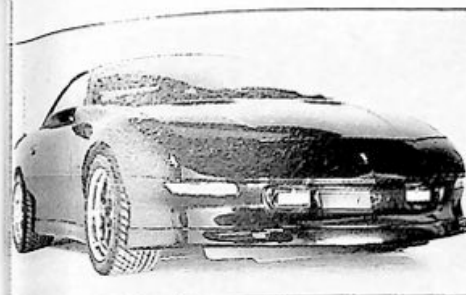
Here's a peek at the Granatelli Signature Series (GSS) Z/28, which is available through Paxton or select Chevy dealers. Paxton upgrades include its LT1 Z/28 supercharger kit, endurance brake pads, stainless Road & Track exhaust, aero package, suspension and chassis-stiffening components (including specific-



rate lowering springs), P275/40ZR17 tires on 17x9.5-inch road wheels, in-dash boost and fuel-pressure gauges, and GSS badging items. Automatics get a shift kit and oil cooler. Paxton's six-speed prototype produces 435 hp and 445 lb-ft of torque, runs the quarter in 12.80 at 109.50 mph on street tires, pulls .97g on the skidpad, has a top speed of 185 mph and a 60-0mph stopping distance of 105 feet. Base price for a manual-trans GSS Z/28, including the price of the car, is \$26,995. The GSS conversion on your car is \$9995. Most of the items on the GSS Z/28 are available separately, including the bolt-on supercharger kit (\$3295). For more information, contact Paxton Products, Dept. KC01, 1260 Calle Suerte, Camarillo, CA 93012, 805/987-5555.

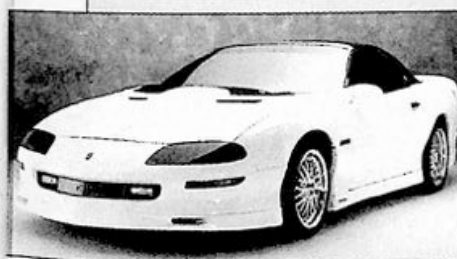


66 KIT CAR



DOUG RIPPİE MOTORSPORTS

DRM has been quite successful racing Corvettes and Camaros in the World Challenge series, and it now offers complete conversions that will turn your Z/28 into the DRM/400^{1G} for \$19,995. This car does zero to 60 mph in 4.5 seconds, has a top speed of 185-plus mph, corners at nearly 1g and stops from 60 mph in 110 feet. The conversion includes the DRM 400-series 383ci LT1 which produces 430 hp and 425 lb-ft of torque (available separately for \$10,395), a FasterLap handling package (\$5795 separately, with a four-point rollbar, XtraGrip suspension and ShortStop brakes), AeroBody, Goodyear GS-CS tires on DRM-exclusive 17x9.5-inch front and 17x11-inch rear Fiske alloy wheels. An optional 375hp 350ci engine drops the package price to \$14,995 or is available separately for \$5295. For more information, contact Doug Rippie Motorsports, Dept. KC01, 12832 Hwy. 55, Plymouth, MN 55441, 612/559-7605.



RK SPORT

This easy-to-install urethane ground-effects package was styled and engineered by the folks who designed the '93-'94 Camaro and includes front, rear and side ground effects, plus a three-piece rear spoiler. Headlight and taillight covers, a hood scoop, a steel grille, chrome exhaust tips, a leather interior package, a rear wing and trim kits are available separately. For more information, contact RK Sport, Dept. KC01, 214 Via El Centro, Oceanside, CA 92054, 619/433-1663. **KC**

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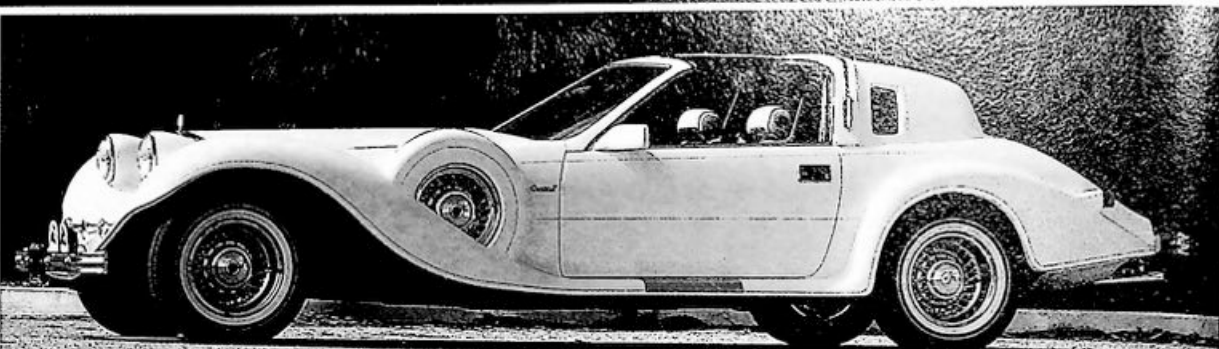
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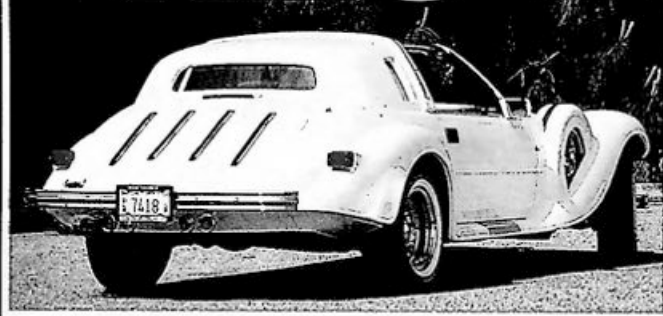
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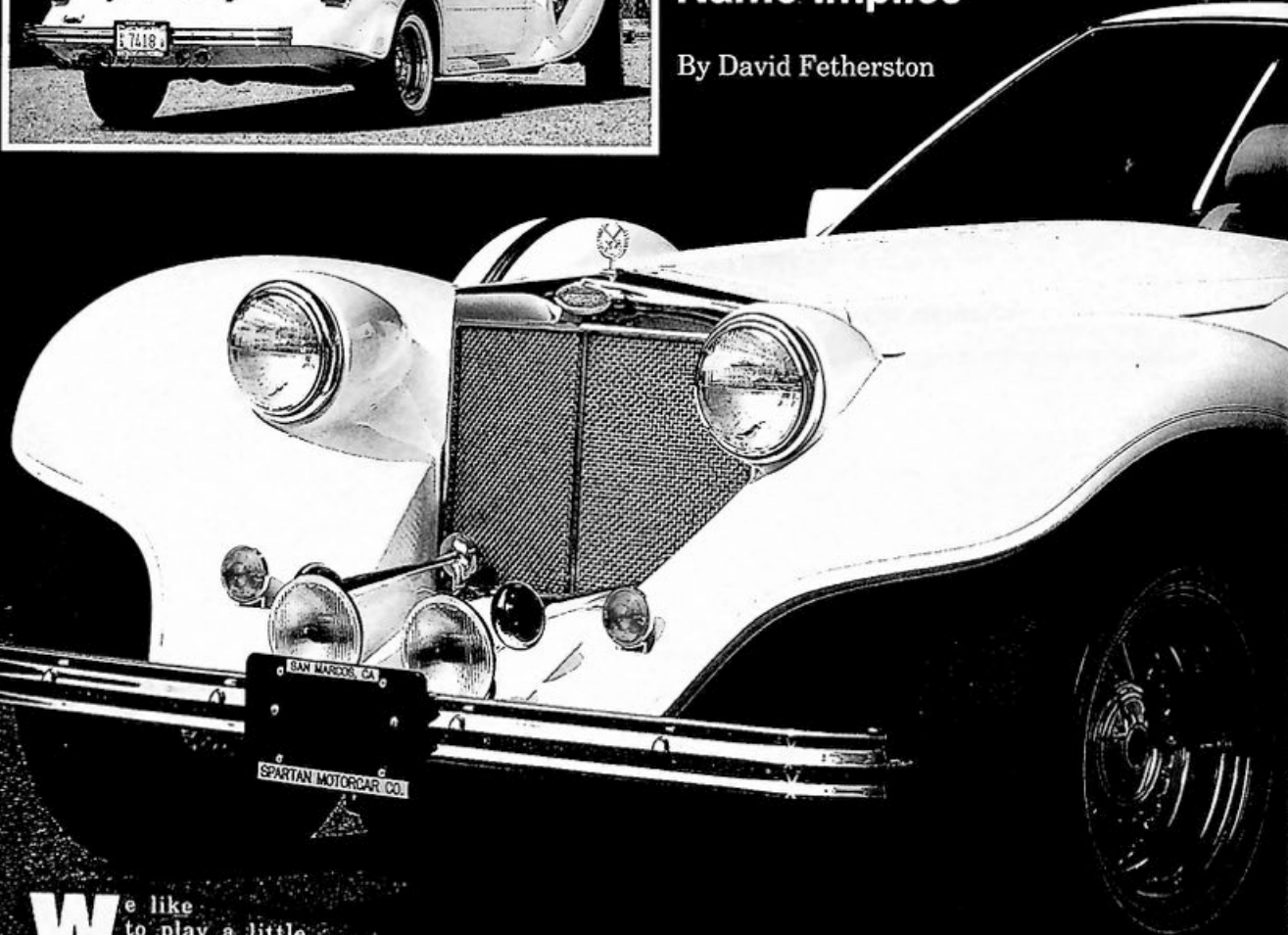


NEO-NISSAN



The Spartan II Is Everything and Anything but What the Name Implies

By David Fetherston



We like to play a little game with the editors of the many other car magazines published by Petersen. To test their vast automotive knowledge, we'll occasionally show these experts a picture of a specialty car and ask them to guess

what's underneath the extravagant or unusual bodywork. Some of the older scribes are wise to us by now and can figure out the donor car merely from the roofline or the shape of a taillight.

It's a lot easier to stump the younger ones. Few specialty cars can fool even our most experienced car guys, but the Spartan is just such a vehicle.

PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVID FETHERSTON

OK, maybe it's because the Las Vegas high-roller body treatment isn't akin to a Pro Street Camaro or a '34 Ford street rod, but whatever the reason, nobody—and we mean nobody—figured there was a 300ZX Nissan concealed under all those swoopy fenders, rounded running boards and chromed car jewelry. More's the pity because that's actually a big part of the appeal of this neoclassic. True, the styling may not be everybody's favorite, but isn't that why there are different flavors of ice cream, too?

Where did this unusual concept originate? Back in the mid-'80s, Ned Lamoureux (we probably couldn't even make up a more fitting name for a neoclassic car builder) was looking for a new automotive venture when he came across the Spartan I design for the Datsun 280ZX. Ned liked the way the car's '30s lines blended with the late-model underpinnings, and he purchased the marketing rights. After producing about 100 units of this version, the original designer helped to rework the body in 1988 to fit the newer Nissan 300ZX (produced from '84 to '89) and created the Spartan II model shown here. Its '30s-era Mercedes and Duesenberg styling cues blend surprisingly well with the 300ZX's modern mechanicals.

Spartan Motorcars offers this conversion in several forms: as a kit, a retrofit for a customer's car or a turn-key running vehicle. Although the starter kit costs \$6900, including fiberglass components and a sub-frame, the complete version with all the trimmings sells for \$14,900. This two-stage pricing structure is essentially a form of financing to help a builder acquire the package in stages. If you'd rather have Spartan

do the assembly on your donor car, a retrofit runs \$29,900, and a ready-to-drive vehicle sells for a base price of \$39,900. Options range from gold plating to color-coordinated custom wheels to a burlwood interior.

For assembly, Spartan removes most of the Nissan's exterior sheet-metal, except for the doors, and bolts and welds a subframe to the front end, extending the stock wheelbase by 27 inches. "We don't even drain the radiator to do the conversion," says Ned, "so working on the mechanicals of the car is no different than working on a production 300ZX." His crew then replaces it with black-primer fiberglass panels, which are attached to the car's substructure. Nissan Super White is the most popular color of paint. Judging from the quality of assembly in the demo vehicle, the reboddy goes on without much difficulty, but the entire operation does take Spartan at least 200 hours. A 4½-hour assembly video is available for kit builders.

Regarding fit and finish, although the flat section of the hood did reveal a few minor ripples, on the whole the contours were clean and smooth, with no ragged edges or misalignments in the 28 fiberglass pieces. We were particularly impressed by the workmanship of the returns on the fender edges and some of the more complex shapes for the bumper mounts and side-mounted faux wheels.

The Nissan 300ZX is powered by a 183ci fuel-injected V6 which remains stock and emissions-legal with Spartan attire. While not as torquey as, say, a 350 Chevy V8, the 168hp powertrain has a turbine-like smoothness befitting a luxury coupe, with acceleration appropriate for stylish motoring. Considering the

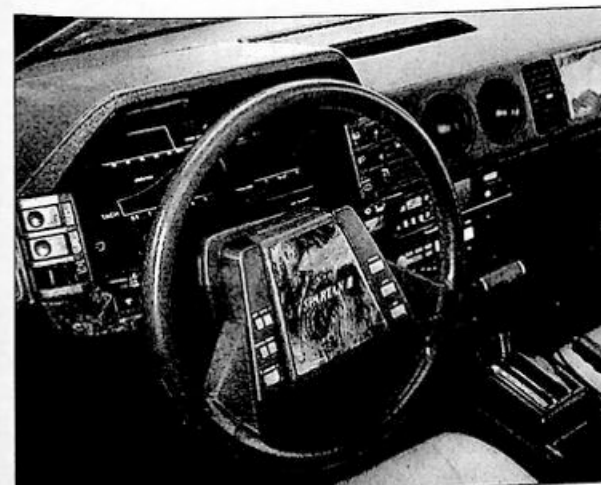
350 pounds of extra weight on the chassis, you won't embarrass any Cobra replicas on stoplight starts, but you will give them a run for their money for attention-getting. As for handling, even though the steering response is not as nimble as on the shorter and lighter donor vehicle, it's as predictable as sunshine in Southern California, and the ride is cushy yet not mushy.

No surprise, then, that more than 300 Spartan IIs have rolled out the doors of Ned Lamoureux's facility, with cars going to luminaries such as Eddie Murphy and Joan Collins, Las Vegas casino owners and an Arab Sheik who purchased two with his American Express card. As you might guess, despite its stark moniker, the Spartan is designed to create a commanding, upscale statement when it arrives, with the implicit message that you have arrived, too. Add to that the practical advantage of Nissan-quality underpinnings and parts and service convenience.

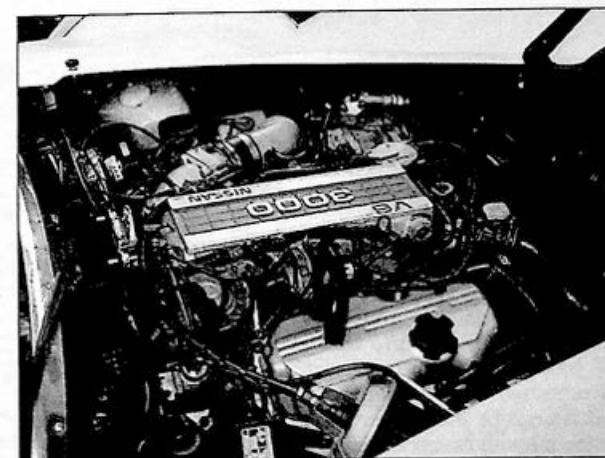
The Spartan II is an innovative concept with high-quality craftsmanship and mechanicals that run as steady as a clock. And to top it off, at the end of the demo drive we chanced upon a stock 300ZX in the parking lot and pulled up next to it for comparison. And you know what? Even we were fooled. **KC**

SOURCE

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Optional upgrades include a burlwood interior.



The Nissan fuel-injected V6 is a smooth-running and reliable powerplant.



Repeat Performance



The Litening Bolt: Your Second Chance at '60s Muscle (Who Says Lightning Never Strikes Twice?)

By Tim Bernsau

Opportunity, you may have been told, only knocks once. If you miss your chance, you won't get another one. The average automotive enthusiast can recite a litany of missed chances, cars he should have bought but didn't. Many of the muscle cars and race cars of the early '60s fall into that category of past neglect and present regret. The kit car hobby exists to eliminate such regrets. The chance you missed once may show up again in the form of a replica vehicle. Opportunity sometimes knocks twice.

We heard opportunity's distinct knock recently when we ran across the Dyno Don Litening Bolt, a '64 Fairlane street/strip specialty car created by Scott Alder and Dyno Don Nicholson and based on one of the most incredible performers of the muscle car era—the Ford Thunderbolt. The Thunderbolts were two-door '64 Fairlane Sedans stripped of radios, heaters and sound deadener, and further lightened with fiberglass fenders and hood, fiberglass or aluminum bumpers, Plexiglass windows and lightweight racing buckets. A ram air 427 with a high-rise manifold,

and dual four-barrel carbs powered the stripped-down strip demons.

Just 11 maroon cars went to top Ford drivers like Dyno Don, and they dominated Stock and A/FX racing. But you didn't have to be Dyno Don to drive a Thunderbolt, because 89 cars, all painted white, were sold to the public. Designated Ford dealerships sold these handbuilt race cars for \$3900. Approximately 60 of those cars are still extant.

Dyno Don and Scott Alder have created the Litening Bolt based on the original Thunderbolt Fairlanes. This car, built for Charles Crites, is the prototype for future Litening Bolts, part of the Dyno Don Signature Series. Dyno Don's involvement has been in engine development. The goal was to build an engine with the power of the Thunderbolt but with street practicality. The result is a four-bolt main Ford 429 Cobra Jet big-block bored and stroked to 514 ci and beefed up with Ford Motorsport aluminum Super Cobra Jet heads, custom headers and Flowmaster mufflers. Topped with a 1050cfm Dominator, the engine makes approximately 750 hp and more than 600 lb-ft of torque (more than enough ponies to embarrass your average Cobra replica—and just about anything else on the street). The engine's appearance

PHOTOGRAPHY: TIM BERNSAU

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Details? Our bodies are all hand laid, not chopped. Our interiors are handmade by Kaufman's, purveyors of fine leather upholstery to upscale homes and offices across Canada and the U.S. for over 100 years. Our brightwork is the best England has to offer.

Check out this chassis: solid and with a low centre of gravity for precise handling. **PLUS** we add a steel floor, a steel firewall,



and a steel transmission tunnel—standard!

Safety? The 2" x 4" square-steel ladder chassis features an internal hoop, forward running upper rails, 2" x 2" lower frame outriggers, inner door steel, individual or full-width roll bars, and a steel firewall, steel floor, and steel transmission tunnel, where most others use only fiberglass. Which would you rather have between you, the engine, and the road?

Performance? Our chassis is a jig-welded, gusseted, structurally-rigid support with a low centre of gravity for superb cornering, using a Ford 8.8 or 9" rear with adjustable coil-over shocks to keep the power from your many engine options firmly on the ground.

Ergonomics? Feel the extra cockpit room. With a lowered floorpan, a dead pedal, and 3" increased front-to-rear interior space allowing adjustable seats, 6'3" fits as well as 5'8". But did we alter the traditional Cobra shape—stretching the length or bulging the width of our snake's skin in unattractive ways? No! Outside, an authentically-sized Cobra re-creation. Inside, ergonomically designed for your comfort.

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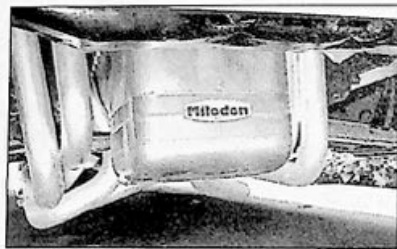
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Repeat Performance



The deep-sump oil pan and low-restriction exhaust headers are additional performance components that not-so-subtly advertise the Litening Bolt's stoutness.

BOLTING YOUR OWN

The Litening Bolt provides great flexibility for kit car enthusiasts. Components are offered individually or in a virtually unlimited number of combinations for kit car builders. A turn-key Dyno Don Litening Bolt is the ultimate option. These high-end cars are built to specifications similar to this first Litening Bolt, using some components unavailable separately. The turn-key cars feature a four-link suspension setup, Dyno Don decals and sequential DDN numbers. They are broken-in and quarter-mile tested by Don Nicholson prior to delivery. Driving school instructions are included with the purchase of turn-key Dyno Don Litening Bolts.

For the kit builder, Crites Industries has virtually everything a do-it-yourselfer will need to transform a two-door '64 Fairlane into a Litening Bolt, with the exception of the '64 Fairlane donor car and drivetrain. The following list includes many of the available components. Call Crites Industries for complete details and ordering information.

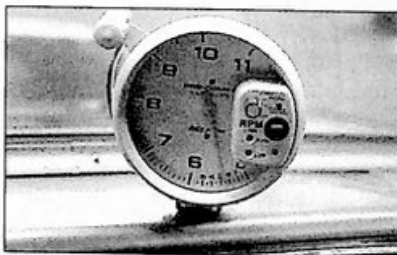
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alone will instill terror in musclecar wannabes.

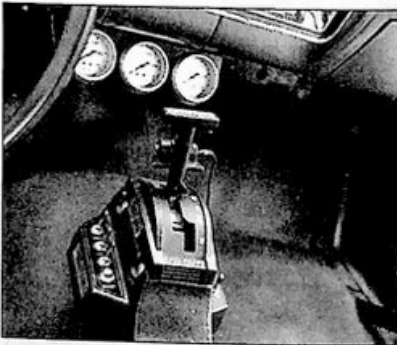
For better breathing, the high-beam headlamps are removed and converted to twin, 6-inch diameter fresh air vents. Mallory ignition components, mounted under the dash where the heater would ordinarily be, provide plenty of spark. An Art Carr C-6 three-speed was modified with a 3500-stall converter and manual valve body, supported by a custom crossmember and operated by a Turbo Action race shifter. The trans cooler was hidden to maintain a vintage look.

The interior is as austere as the original Thunderbolt's, with armrestless door panels, vinyl-covered buckets and rubber floor covering. Windshield wipers remain since the Litening Bolt is intended for street use, despite its racy outfitting.

The suspension further maximizes the car's performance potential. Subframe connectors were added, and the traction bars are replicas of those found on the T-bolts; future Litening Bolts will feature a four-link setup. Other suspension mods include the hi-po front spring kit and shock tower braces. The brakes have been upgraded with a four-wheel disc kit and twin master cylinders.



This Auto Meter tach, part of the Pro-Comp 2 Ultra-Lite series, features a shift light and recall function for consistent quarter-mile performance. Note the skewed rpm range.

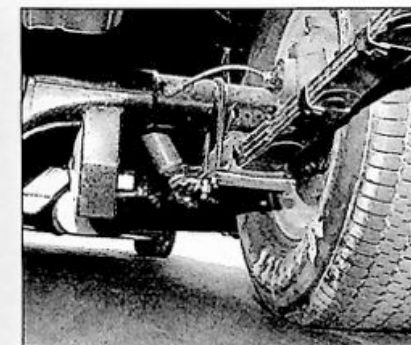


The Turbo Action Cheetah SCS racing shifter controls the Art Carr C-6 transmission and features reverse lockout, Line Lock and a trans brake. A fabricated plate raises the shifter a few inches.

The Litening Bolt blends the best of two automotive worlds: the spirited performance of '60s muscle and the advanced performance of the '90s. The car can cruise suburbia all day long with no problems other than the occasional distracted gaper in the next lane or a startled kid swerving on his bicycle. The Bolt will plant you in your seat climbing a freeway on-ramp and get you to the posted speed limit in half a jiffy. This Litening strike should also hit the high 9s at the strip. At press time, no thorough strip testing had been done, but Dyno Don and Scott anticipate e.t.'s in the 9.8s.

Encouraged by the Litening Bolt's success, Nicholson and Alder are already making plans to add performance Galaxies, Falcons, Comets and other Ford race car replicas to the Dyno Don Signature Series.

You don't have to be Dyno Don to drive a Litening Bolt. Turn-key cars are available from the Dyno Don Signature Series. Crites Industries, owned by Charles Crites (who also owns this Litening Bolt and a few original Thunderbolts), has the components available to allow you to build a Litening Bolt from your own '64 Fairlane platform. Whatever you do, don't miss this opportunity. It may not knock again. **KC**



Traction bars, replicas of the original Thunderbolt traction bars, are welded onto the rear end housing. A four-link is being developed for the Litening Bolt. This car runs either Hoosier or Mickey Thompson tires on vintage American Racing wheels and has disc brakes at all four wheels.

SOURCES

Dyno Don Signature Series
Scott Alder
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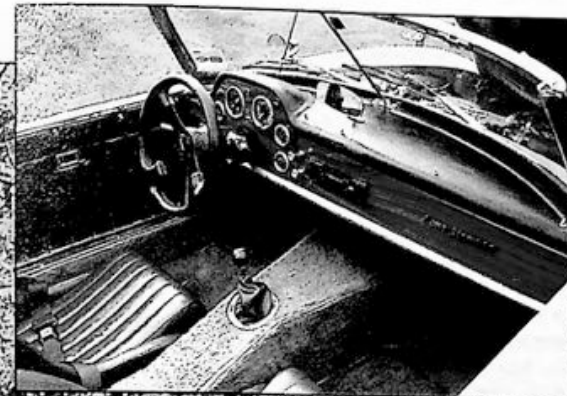
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Rising Stars

A Trio of Kits from Lone Star Classics Has Already Appeared, and Yet Another Is on the Horizon

By Jerry Heasley & Joe Greeves



Troy Hudson has had his hands full lately. Not only has he developed three new kits from the ground up within the last few years, but he's also working on his fourth. Lone Star Classics' array of replicas is designed to appeal to a wide range of automotive tastes, from a Cobra (seems you can't be in the kit business without one these days) to a Corvette (the very first version of "America's Sports Car," the '53) to a Mercedes 300SL (another legendary roadster from the '50s). And what is the fourth replica in the works? It's a GT40, yet another go-fast Ford to complement the Cobra.

We've featured Lone Star's '53 Corvette kit in previous issues (most recently in "Veterans Day Parade," May '94), so we won't cover the same territory again other than to point out that the kit price starts at \$16,500 and the underpinnings are the popular Mustang II fronts and a Ford 9-inch rearend. Most readers



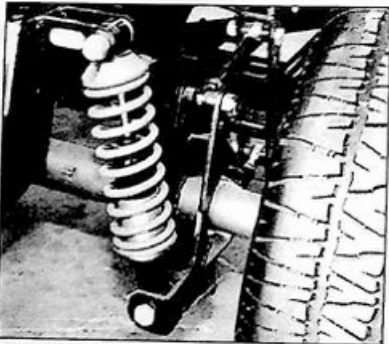
PHOTOGRAPHY: JERRY HEASLEY & JOE GREEVES

Rising Stars

want to know about Cobra kits, so we'll hit that one first and then cover the Mercedes replica.

Different Strokes—and Bores

Mike Herman bought Lone Star's very first Cobra replica, designated as the LS427, though he didn't stock the engine bay with Ford's 427 FE series big-block. Instead he chose a 385hp Ford 351 from SVO. In a sense Mike's selection is still historically accurate, considering that Shelby American originally wanted a 351 for its coil-sprung Cobra. Since Ford was backing the project financially and the company brass wanted to pum-
mel the '65 396 Corvette, the 427



The LS427 live-axle rear end uses a four-link setup with coil-over shocks.

was the weapon of choice for a no-holds-barred street fighter. Of course, Ford got its wish and the 427 Cobra became the car to imitate in the kit car business once the originals soared out of sight in price.

Troy's fascination with Cobras has more to do with building than driving, which is why in the mid-'80s he ordered several different replica kits. He was dissatisfied with what he received, or rather, what he *didn't* receive after paying for it. With an engineering background that includes college training, running a machine shop and sundry other jobs such as designing cooling towers and air-conditioning systems, Troy decided it would not be so difficult to engineer his own Cobra kit.

The standout feature of the LS427 is the strong and rigid 2x4-inch rectangular-tube frame. It features an X-member to minimize any twisting that would turn the frame into a "fifth spring," allowing for more precise suspension tuning and better

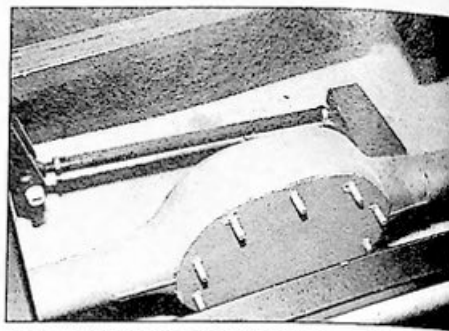
handling. Up front, the frame has custom tubular control arms with polyurethane bushings and ball joints and Carrera coil-over shocks. At the rear is a Ford 9-inch live axle nailed to the ground with four-bar links and smoothed over with coil-over shocks. A Panhard rod keeps the rear end from moving side to side, and an antisway bar lends more chassis stability.

Just as solid are the steel-reinforced doors which attach directly to the frame and feature heavy-duty hardware. Hudson lengthened the wheelbase slightly compared with the original specs (from 90 to 94 inches) to accommodate a longer door for easier access. Otherwise the fender and hood sizes appear faithful to the authentic item. The fiberglass body normally comes with Coremat in the layup for strength and to minimize print-through of the cloth, but a stronger and lighter Kevlar version is available as well.

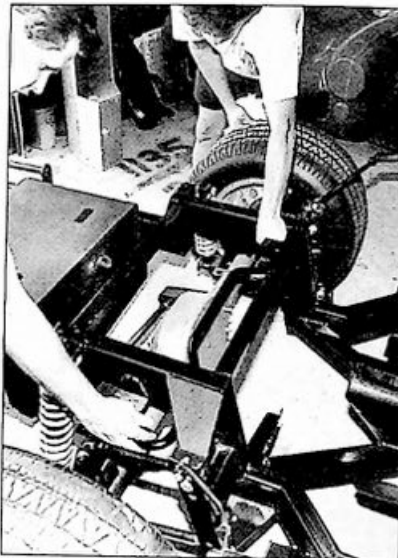
People taller than 6 feet will appreciate the longer doors and increased legroom. The handstitched seats provide good lumbar and lateral support. Although Lone Star's brushed-aluminum panel is more popular, Mike chose a custom-built wooden panel with the gauges laid out in a symmetrical design. By the time he finished his project, Mike says he had tallied 700 hours in actual building and another 200 hours in chasing down parts and having custom work done. He and his son did 90 percent of the work by simply following the company's detailed assembly manual. They were very satisfied with the folks at Lone Star. "They're very honorable people," says Mike, "and they delivered everything as promised."

One Marvelous Mercedes

The 300SL and its counterpart, the Gullwing Coupe, were milestones in the history of Mercedes. They represented the finest combination of speed, style and prestige among automobiles of the day. (Of course, it didn't hurt that a then-youthful magazine publisher named Hugh Hefner dashed about town in one.) Eight 300SL (for Sporting Light) prototypes were built and campaigned by Daimler-Benz in 1952, and the coupe was introduced as a production model in 1954. The first roadster was a rebodied coupe that appeared in 1955. These high-powered, good-handling cars were directly responsible for returning Mercedes to the winner's circle. They humbled the Jaguar and Ferrari competition by placing First and Second in their



A Panhard rod is also installed on the rear-axle housing.

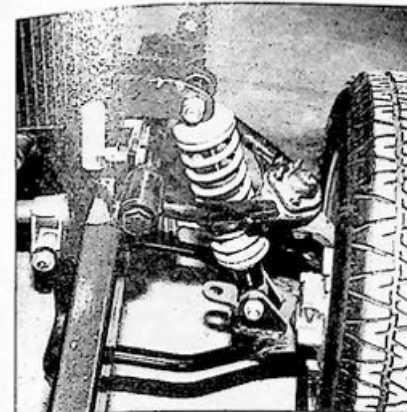


Troy Hudson and assistant Darrell Claxton slip in the stock rear stabilizer bar which is also part of the kit.

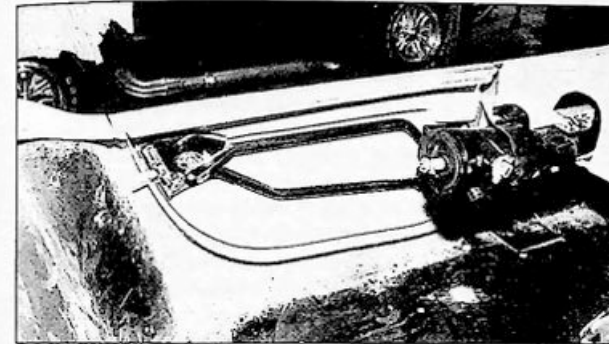
debut at the 24 Hours of Le Mans, just the beginning of a long string of victories.

Lone Star has created a stylized version of this rare roadster, called the LS300. Its handlaid, one-piece fiberglass body mounts on a 2x4-inch rectangular-tube frame with an adjustable bolt-in crossmember that can be welded permanently in place once the transmission is correctly positioned. Rather than suggesting customers scrounge the salvage yard for suspension pieces, Lone Star has designed an integrated package consisting of a custom tubular A-arm front end and an 8-inch Ford rear end with a four-link, coil-over setup. Mustang spindles, disc brakes and steering components, all turning 14-inch Mustang wheels, complete the underpinnings.

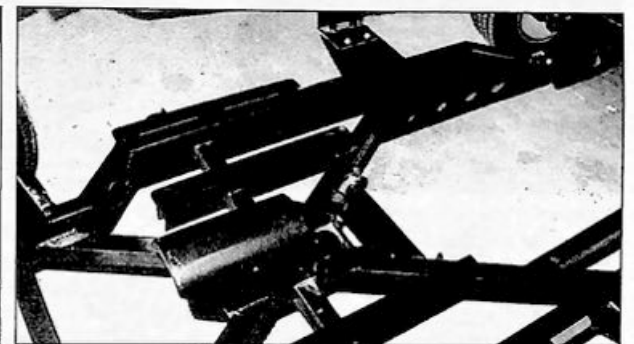
The clean, functional interior is faithful to the original's Teutonic engineering and comes complete with handstitched bucket seats, door panels, pre-cut carpeting and full instrumentation hooked up to a cus-



Instead of Mustang II units, Lone Star installs custom tubular A-arms in the front.



Steel reinforcements in the Cobra's doors ensure that they close with a solid thunk.



The X-member in the frame is designed to resist torsional loads.



A GT40 replica is currently under development and should be ready by next year.



Lone Star is well-versed in a variety of engines, be it a 5.0-liter Ford in the LS300 (left) or a 350 Chevy in the LS53 (right).

tom wiring harness. A manually operated convertible top, based on an MGA frame, is also available (the one we saw could have been fitted a bit more snugly).

The price of the standard kit starts at \$12,500 and includes the body, bumpers, a windshield, a ladder-style frame, a radiator, a fuel tank, front and rear suspension mounts, hardware, interior pieces, an electrical package and an assembly manual. Troy says customers should plan on at least 350 hours of labor to complete the kit. Already assembled vehicles start at \$35,000, powered by a Ford 5.0-liter V8 and T-5 transmission.

Looking at the product line overall,

we like the extra efforts Lone Star has expended in areas such as fiberglass lamination and chassis engineering. Just as important is the fact that Troy Hudson was once a kit car customer, so he knows firsthand what a Lone Star customer wants and needs. It all sounds like stellar stuff to us. **KC**

SOURCE

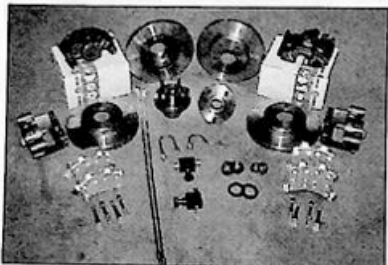
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817/431-5422

FIERO BRAKE UPDATE

I've heard there are several ways of improving the braking on a Fiero. I have a V8-powered Euro Works Lambo replica, and the brakes are woefully lacking when it comes to stopping this quick beast. What can be done?

Brian Kelly
Appleton, WI

Speedway Brakes (219/982-8115) has a Fiero brake package that includes a pair of custom hubs (with bearings, races, seals and studs), four new vented rotors, metallic brake pads, four calipers, an adjustable



proportioning valve, lines and hardware. The kit costs just under \$1100 and is said to be a four-hour bolt-on project. In Speedway tests on an '85 V8-powered Fiero, stopping distances improved from 60-0 mph by 22 feet. This kit does not make a provision for

KIT TECH

By Jim Youngs

the cable-operated parking brake, but an option is available.

BASIC KIT OR ROLLER?

I have just finished browsing through Kit Car's Top 100 Kits Buyers' Guide in the September '94 issue. First, could you tell me what a basic kit would contain as compared to the rolling chassis, and what level of expertise is required for building a kit? Second, are there companies that would sell measured drawings of the chassis of a Cobra?

Gary Maruca
South Windsor, CT

Your questions are extremely broad, and it's difficult to provide a simple answer. So-called "basic kits" run the gamut from every piece you could possibly consider in a buildup to little more than a fiberglass body shell. Each manufacturer defines "basic" individually, and unfortunately, that's probably where your legwork begins in determining what you get

in each company's offerings. A rolling chassis package, on the other hand, typically is a frame with all the suspension, steering and brake components in place and often engine, transmission and body mounts welded on. Although there are exceptions, these rollers typically do not come with wheels and tires. Though there may be some, we can't think of any Cobra chassis plans available. You might want to check out a copy of Door Slammers: The Chassis Book by Dave Morgan, available through S&W Race Cars (800/523-3353).

WHAT'S A TURN-KEY?

I have just started to read your magazine. I have become very interested in kit cars recently, and I have a few questions. First, when a company advertises a "turn-key" car for \$29,000, does that mean it can be purchased for that amount of money fully assembled and ready to drive? Second, is it possible to buy a kit car fully assembled? I know it would probably cost more. Finally, are there any books that describe kit cars in depth?

J.R. Vanwassenhove
Columbus, OH

Yes, "turn-key" usually refers to a complete car, ready for you to plunk

down your money, get behind the wheel, turn the key (hence the term) and drive away. Many kit car builders offer completed cars, plus there are numerous assembly shops around the country that will custom-build a kit car to your specifications. Since you mentioned that you are a new Kit Car reader, we'll answer your final question with an admonition to keep on reading this magazine because we regularly provide in-depth technical information on building your own car. (This particular issue is a case in point.) You might also contact Classic Motorbooks (800/826-6600) to see what's in its catalog of publications.

LEGAL VICKY

I am building a Classic Motor Carriages '33 Vicky replica. I have a '94 Ford Mustang 5.0-liter engine with the AODE transmission that I am currently fitting into the chassis. I have several questions to help point me in the right direction.

I have been in contact with Dr. K regarding the wiring. Has anyone actually combined the AODE and 5.0 engine electronics? The difficult part is trying to maintain the pollution controls while stuffing everything into a Vicky. The exhaust system is a primary concern. Mustangs are using four catalytic converters. Has anyone come up with a design to make a compact unit of mufflers and catalytic converters (especially in the limited space under a street rod)? The gas tank is another concern. I am gathering literature on gas tanks to incorporate the fuel pump in the tank and still maintain the pollution controls. The initial literature is vague at best, and more information is needed. The steering linkage will make it necessary to relocate the A/C compressor to the top of the engine. Is there a Ford casting that puts the compressor to the top of the 5.0? Everything else fits in its stock position.

Eric Faas
Houston, TX

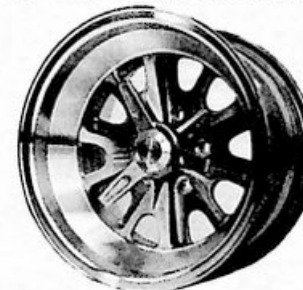
Installing the late-model 5.0 Ford is probably not as mysterious as you might assume. Many builders are installing those motors with all the emissions equipment intact. The Talbo (407/844-5411), Panoz (404/867-4796) and JAC Cobra (414/771-7172), all turn-key cars, use the same drivetrain and emissions equipment. Everett-Morrison (813/887-5885) and our own SMC Cobra kit project have single cats installed in the sidepipes (see "Pipe

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KIT TECH

Music," March '93 for details, or call Thunder Motors at 214/790-4515. You'll also want to call the tech hotline (313/337-1356) at Ford SVO for information and details on its Multiport EFI wiring harness, among other Ford parts. BBK Performance (909/735-8880) is also a handy resource, particularly for the in-tank fuel pump, mass airflow system and other hop-up goodies. As for the A/C bracketry, we don't know of a specific item, but browse through some parts catalogs (see catalog section in the Nov. '94 issue). On our Cobra project we had to fabricate some custom brackets to relocate the smog pump where the A/C compressor would normally go.

ROTARY SWAP

I have enjoyed reading your magazine for many years, and for the first time I'm writing you in hope that you may be able to answer my questions. I currently have two replicas that I have completely rebuilt: a Daytona Spyder replica built on an '80 Corvette frame and an Intermeccanica 356 Convertible D Porsche replica built on a custom frame. I recently had the 1835cc Type I motor in the 356 replica burn an exhaust valve, and I am looking for a replacement.

However, after reading about and personally experiencing the troubles of obtaining both long life and high horsepower from the Type I motor, I am considering an engine swap, specifically the Mazda rotary. I have talked to Kennedy Engineered Products (KEP) about making VW to Wankel conversions for a variety of kits, but the company doesn't know if anyone has been successful with a rotary swap in a Porsche Speedster-style replica. KEP says it has received many inquiries for such a conversion, so I'm not alone.

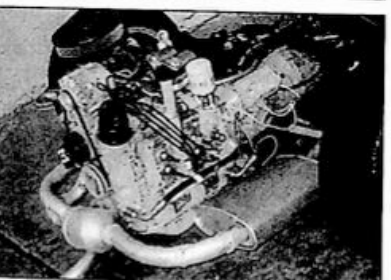
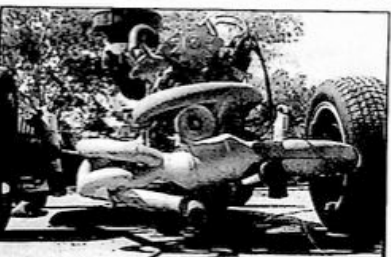
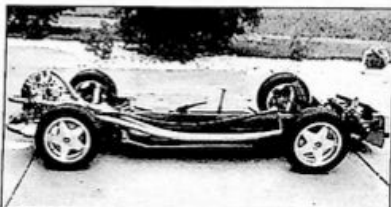
Having owned a Mazda RX-7 and being an engineer, I know something about the problems associated with the swap, i.e., the rotary requires a relatively large radiator (small V8 capacity) and an oil cooler, and it has very high exhaust-gas temperatures. It would be comforting to talk to someone who has done (or tried and failed to do) such an installation in the 356 body replica. I really do not want to cut up the external front bodywork, which would detract from the original

80 KIT CAR

styling. Also, I am concerned about whether or not a large enough radiator can be made to fit into a location where there is also adequate airflow scooped in from below. Any information from you or fellow enthusiasts would be greatly appreciated.

Richard Conner
Solon, OH

One of our readers sent in some info on his Beck 550 Spyder replica with a rotary conversion, and we plan to feature it in a coming issue. You're right about the heat dissipation problems



Note how the radiator hose runs along the passenger side of the VW pan's spine. Also, the exhaust system requires some custom bending.

(look at the buildup tips featured elsewhere in this issue for some solutions). We also featured a rotary-powered 959-style Speedster kit (shown here) from Classic Motor Carriages in the May '93 issue of Specialty Car.

Having a technical problem assembling your kit? Send your questions to Kit Car, "Kit Tech," 6420 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048. (No phone calls, please. We're sorry, but we're unable to respond privately.)

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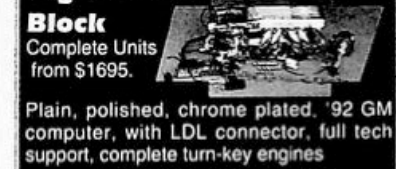
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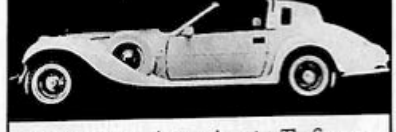
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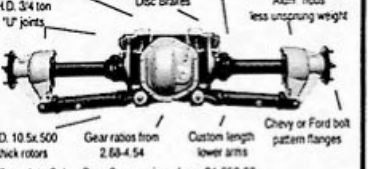
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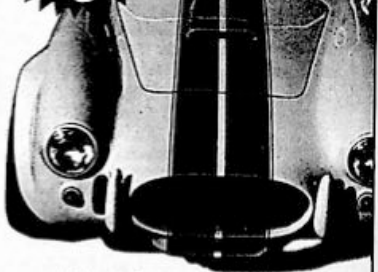


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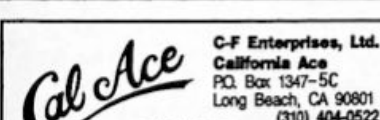
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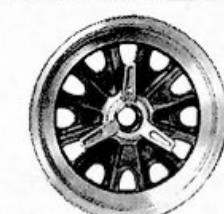
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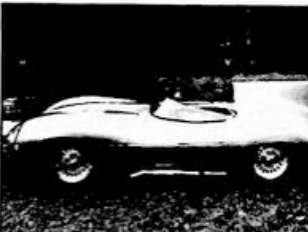
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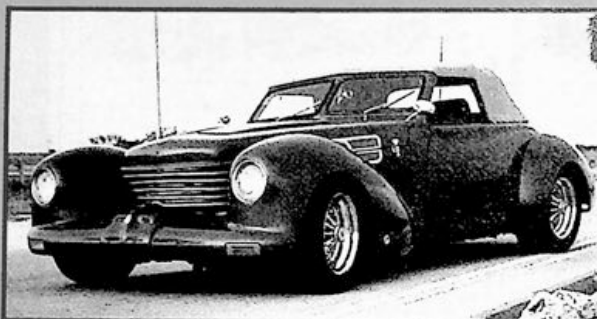
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We found this S.A.M.C.O. replica of a '37 Cord sitting in a used car lot. We had always wanted to build a show car, but not just the usual Ford or Chevy, and so our dream began. Six years later our project was completed. Our Cord received a major facelift. First, we frenched the headlights, taillights, exhaust and the power antenna. Then the front and rear fenders were rounded and flared 4 inches. We also lowered the body 8 inches and installed a custom stainless-steel front bumper. A pair of '92 Z28 Camaro hood scoops were added, and a set of SP Sports D-40 M2 Dunlop tires were mounted on Crager 30-spoke wire wheels. The Cord is powered by a '70 high-



performance Mopar 440 engine rated at 475 hp. It's detailed with chrome and polished aluminum, the transmission is a beefed-up 727 TorqueFlite, and the rearend is a 9-inch Ford.

The interior has diamond-tucked Fiero seats, Custom VDO gauges, a B&M shifter, power windows, a Kenwood stereo, a Cobra CB and a custom G/T Grant steering wheel. The final touch was 20 coats of GM Medium Garnet Red Lacquer paint. Our Cord has won many First Place awards for paint, interior, engine, People's Choice and Best of Show. Our dream is complete!

Chaz and Cindy Hamilton
Seffner, FL

STRANDED IN THE U.K.

Enclosed are photos of my Reflex sports car. I cannot bring it with me to the United States due to EPA requirements, which is very annoying. The car has a true spaceframe chassis with a one-piece body shell, a front trunk and engine cover, plus a rear trunk. All the major parts are from a Ford Escort: engine, transmission, suspension, steering, brakes and dashboard.

I realize the engine is nothing to shout about by U.S. standards, but with gas at \$4.50 a gallon in the United Kingdom, it was a good compromise. The chassis can be jigged for any engine (including a V8) at the cost of the rear trunk area. McPherson struts at each corner give the car excellent handling even without anti-rollbars. The coil-over struts are adjustable for damping and camber at the front. I decided on faired-in headlights, but pop-ups are supplied with the body moldings.

I was very disappointed that I couldn't bring my pride and joy into this country with me, and if anyone can help me with this I would be very grateful. The car runs on unleaded fuel, but no catalytic converter is fitted. The engine is an '89 Ford with only 4300 miles on it.

As a guide, it cost me around \$15,000 and two years of my life to finish at a very high standard using mostly new parts. For anyone with a business mind, the molds and jigs could be acquired for a very reasonable price. It is not a car I would recommend for first-time builders unless you have good mechanical knowledge. I only managed to drive it for six months, but it was worth every minute. It is currently up for sale in the United Kingdom unless I find a way to bring it across to the United States. If anyone is interested in building one, feel free to contact me at 210/494-0549. I love the magazine! Keep up the good work!

Allan Phillips
San Antonio, TX



GOLDEN YEARS

As I approached my retirement from the U.S. Navy, I began to make plans to acquire my personal dose of pure excitement. I had owned an '83 Vette and sold it before moving to Pearl Harbor. My wife tried to buck up my flagging spirits by saying, "Don't worry, you can get another one." I made up my mind then that there would be a Cobra in my garage.

Mike Wells of Integrity Coach Works took my ideas and produced this beautiful piece pictured here. It was one of the original cars imported from South Africa when Integrity was just forming. It is black with a quartz gray stripe and sports a modified 351W with a Holley 650 feeding an Offenhauser dual-port manifold, flowed heads and a 280 Magnum cam. The T-5 tranny was modified by the fellows in Ernie Elliott's shop. With lag running gear, this Cobra corners like a marble in a garden hose.

Needless to say, I'm intensely proud of it, and as you can see, I've had a pretty successful season at several local shows. The car never fails to attract the attention of even the most jaded show-goers. As a testimony to the accuracy and workmanship of the Integrity kit, I have been put in production classes several times. But driving a Cobra is what it's all about, so it's never been trailered, and I take it to

work whenever possible. Yes, retirement can be enjoyable with the right equipment. And I haven't seen a fishing pole or a bag of golf clubs yet that can break 150 mph!

Bob Pitchford
Scottsville, KY



Dear Reader: Show us your kit car! We know how proud you must be, so here's your chance to tell others about it. Take a few snapshots and jot down some details about your project, and send them to: Show-Off, Kit Car, 6420 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048-5515.

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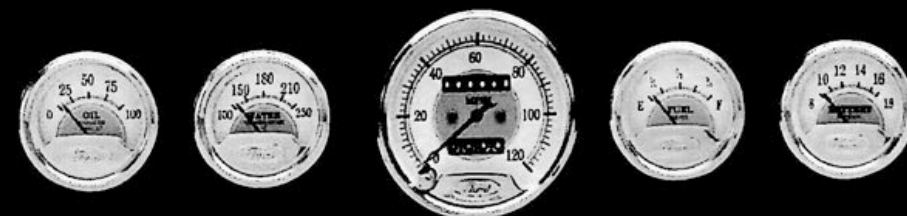
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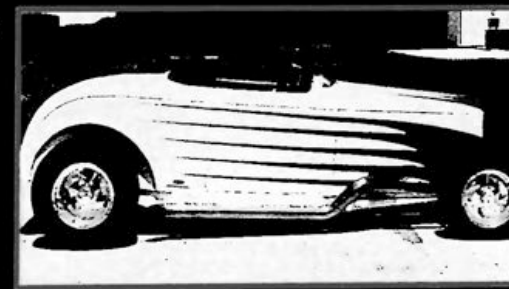
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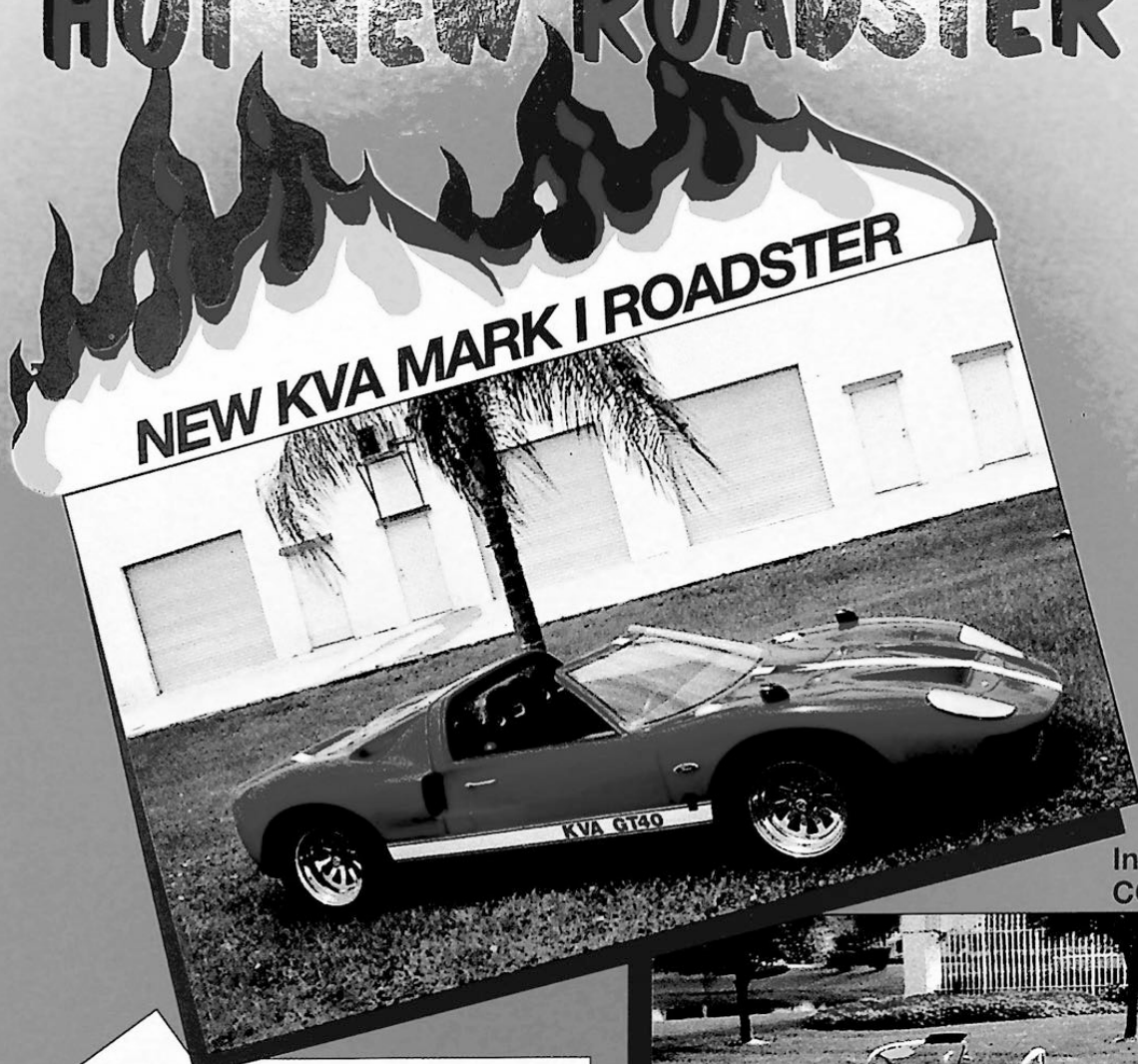


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